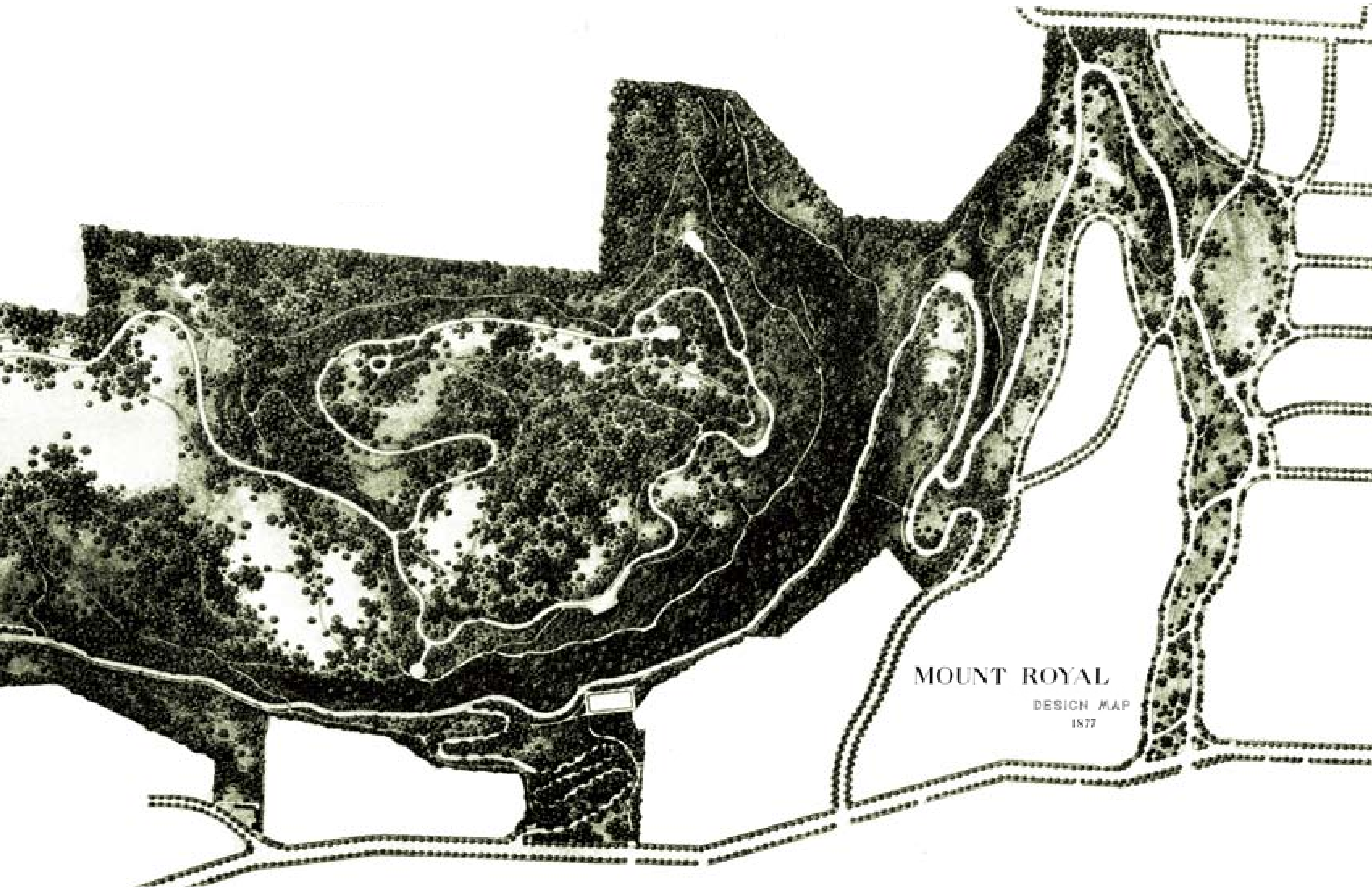
MOUNT ROYAL IN THE WORKS OF

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED



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ENTENTE SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT CULTUREL DE **MONTRÉAL**

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Frederick Law Olmsted, 1885

INTRODUCTION

I have the honor to comply with you request that I would repeat in writing the substance of certain observations verbally made to you last Monday, in regard to your property of Mount Royal.

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Frederick Law Olmsted was the dominant figure in the creation of a profession of landscape architecture in North America during the second half of the Nineteenth century. The extent of his professional practice alone is impressive. He carried out landscape projects from Boston to San Francisco Bay, and from Montreal to Atlanta. Between 1857, when he and Calvert Vaux won the design competition for Central Park in New York City, and 1895, the year of his retirement, he and his partners and staff undertook some five hundred commissions. The firm that he founded, led thereafter by his sons, went on to add three thousand more commissions during the next fifty years. For a full century, the Olmsted firm was the most productive and influential group of landscape architects in America. His accomplishments and his style of design are still the most influential and revered of his profession.

During his years of practice, Olmsted developed a distinctive design style that produced a unified landscape experience and gave the spaces he created a powerful psychological effect. At the same time he designed on a larger scale than any of his predecessors on this continent, creating comprehensive systems of parks and parkways that constituted the most important examples of city planning of his era. He based his design and planning work on a remarkably extensive experience as observer and commentator on life in America. All of these aspects of the man and his career stemmed from his desire to use landscape architecture to meet the needs of the industrializing society of North America in the Nineteenth Century. He also wished to demonstrate the viability of republican government and democratic institutions in an age when autocracy was gaining new strength in Europe. →

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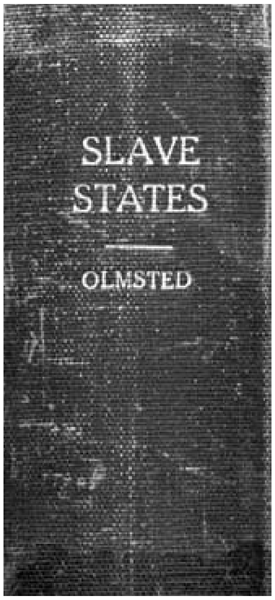

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By the time he became a landscape architect, Olmsted had pursued a noted career as a journalist and activist in the antislavery movement in the United States. Following the success of his description of a walking tour in England, *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England*, he was commissioned by the *New York Times* to travel through the slaveholding states and analyze the society of the American South. From the seventy-five letters that he wrote, he produced three influential volumes of description and historical analysis that served as an important source for the growing antislavery movement and the nascent Republican Party. His best-known book on the South is *The Cotton Kingdom*, a selection of material from his earlier three volumes, which he published in 1861 with the purpose of convincing Great Britain not to grant official recognition to the Confederate States of America. His experience in the South led him to dedicate himself to creation of a society in the North that would demonstrate the superiority of a social system based on free labour. He noted especially the importance of creating institutions of science, art, and culture that would be available to all persons. Even at this early date, he emphasized the importance of creating public parks. Moreover, his experience of living in New York city in the 1850s gave him direct insight into the *"heart hardening"* atmosphere of the growing metropolis. Here and elsewhere throughout his career he sought to use his skills as a designer to foster community and what he called *"communitiveness"*-- a dedication by all members of the community to serving each other's needs. For Olmsted, generous provision of public open space was a crucial means to this end. The park systems he planned were intended to provide common ground, a commonly owned and accessible space that all groups in the city could share free from the competitive atmosphere of daily life.

As a designer of urban park systems, Olmsted defined the several elements that became the model for cities in North America. One feature was the large park devoted to the experience of landscape as the central feature of such a system. His parks were more systematically planned for this experience than any previously created in Europe or the British Isles. For him, the park had a special meaning and a special role. Its *raison d'être* was to provide a series of landscape scenes that would counteract the debilitating effect of what we now call stress, the stress of urban life. Olmsted believed that natural scenery was most restorative when it acted by what he called an *"unconscious"* process. The visitor must immerse himself or herself in the landscape, free from distractions that would interfere with this process. Olmsted designed both the scenery and the means of moving through it with this concept in mind. He subordinated all elements to that purpose more systematically than did any other landscape designer of his time.

This was the element of personal and restorative experience of the urban park as Olmsted conceived it. There were other elements as well, important but nonetheless of secondary importance. These were places for groups of people to enjoy picnicking and other *"gregarious"* activities; and formal areas, paved and spacious, for civic events and musical performances. In Olmsted's view, some of these activities were better placed in their own sites, where they could be planned without fear of intruding on the landscape. His concept of the park system was a series of public spaces, each serving a particular purpose for all residents of the city. Uniting the scattered elements of the park system--and providing a structure of public open space for the expanding city--were what Olmsted and his partner Calvert Vaux called "parkways."

These parkways were green ribbons, preferably 200 feet wide, that connected parks and playgrounds, providing neighbourhood park space and serving as pleasant carriage drives either for moving from one park to another and about the city. Each parkway had a wide, smooth-paved drive for the exclusive use of private carriages, while carts and wagons were required to use cobblestone roads on either side. Further separation of ways of travel was provided by bridle paths and pedestrian walks. Rows of trees separated the various ways, creating an effect of green and shade. The concept of the parkway, and the term itself, has survived in modern times as a pleasantly landscape drive for private vehicles that excludes commercial traffic.

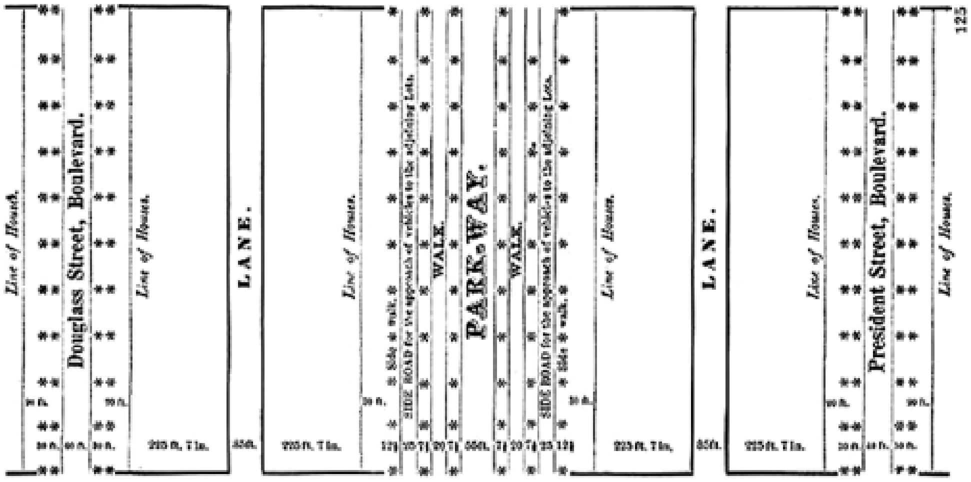
Outside the city Olmsted also played an important role in the movement to set aside areas of special scenic value as public reservations. He was chairman of the first commission in charge of Yosemite in California and in 1865 he wrote a rationale for saving and administering that area that his son used fifty years later in writing legislation to create the National Park system of the United States. Olmsted was also a leader in the campaign to create the state reservation at Niagara Falls (New York). He and Calvert Vaux developed the plan for the reservation in 1887, and the Olmsted firm later did planning work for the Ontario side of the falls. During the latter part of his career, Olmsted gave increased attention to the preservation of scenic areas within cities, something that first appears significantly in his Mount Royal report of 1881, and which he later applied to developing park systems for Boston, Rochester, N.Y, and Louisville, Kentucky.

In addition to the elements of public urban space that Olmsted conceived and created, he saw many other aspects of society that could benefit from the skills of the landscape architect. He was a prophet of suburban residential communities that combined the landscape advantages of country life with the engineering advantages of well constructed roads, drainage and sewerage systems, and water supply. As with the city at large, Olmsted's particular concern was the provision of open space held in common by all residents and ranging from neighbourhood play areas to reservation of stream banks and other areas of scenic value.

The suburban residential community, in Olmsted's view, was to provide a setting for domesticity that would improve quality of life while it strengthened family bonds and the role of the family as an educational institution. Fundamental to his plan for the individual family home was creation of "outdoor apartments"--spaces next to the house to which the activities of the home could be extended. The healthful benefit, he was convinced, would be significant, while maintenance of plantings would serve as a training ground in aesthetic sensibility.

In this variety of designs, Olmsted sought to respect the "genius of the place," and to use the natural character of a site as the key to creating a unique and viable space for a particular activity. He also used the psychological power of natural scenery and designed landscape to create spaces that were beneficial for their users. He wanted landscapes that were sustaining as well as sustainable. He worked with the native plants of the region and made them the basis of his selection of plant materials, and he rejected the use of annuals and exotics that required costly care and seasonal replacement. At the same time, he used many non-native plants in order to gain variety and richness of effect. He selected plants that could thrive in a given microclimate without becoming invasive. →

The Parkway and Boulevards.



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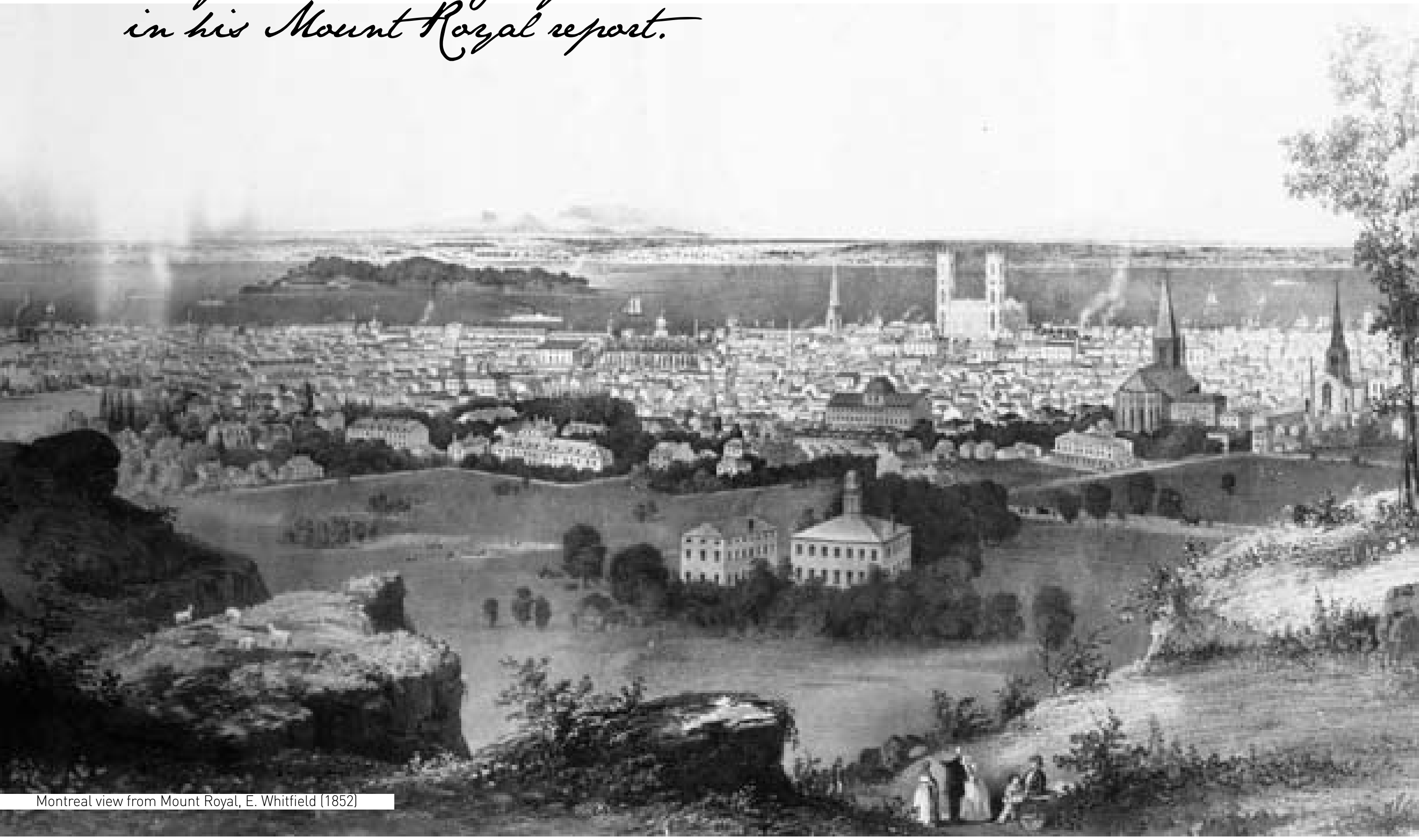


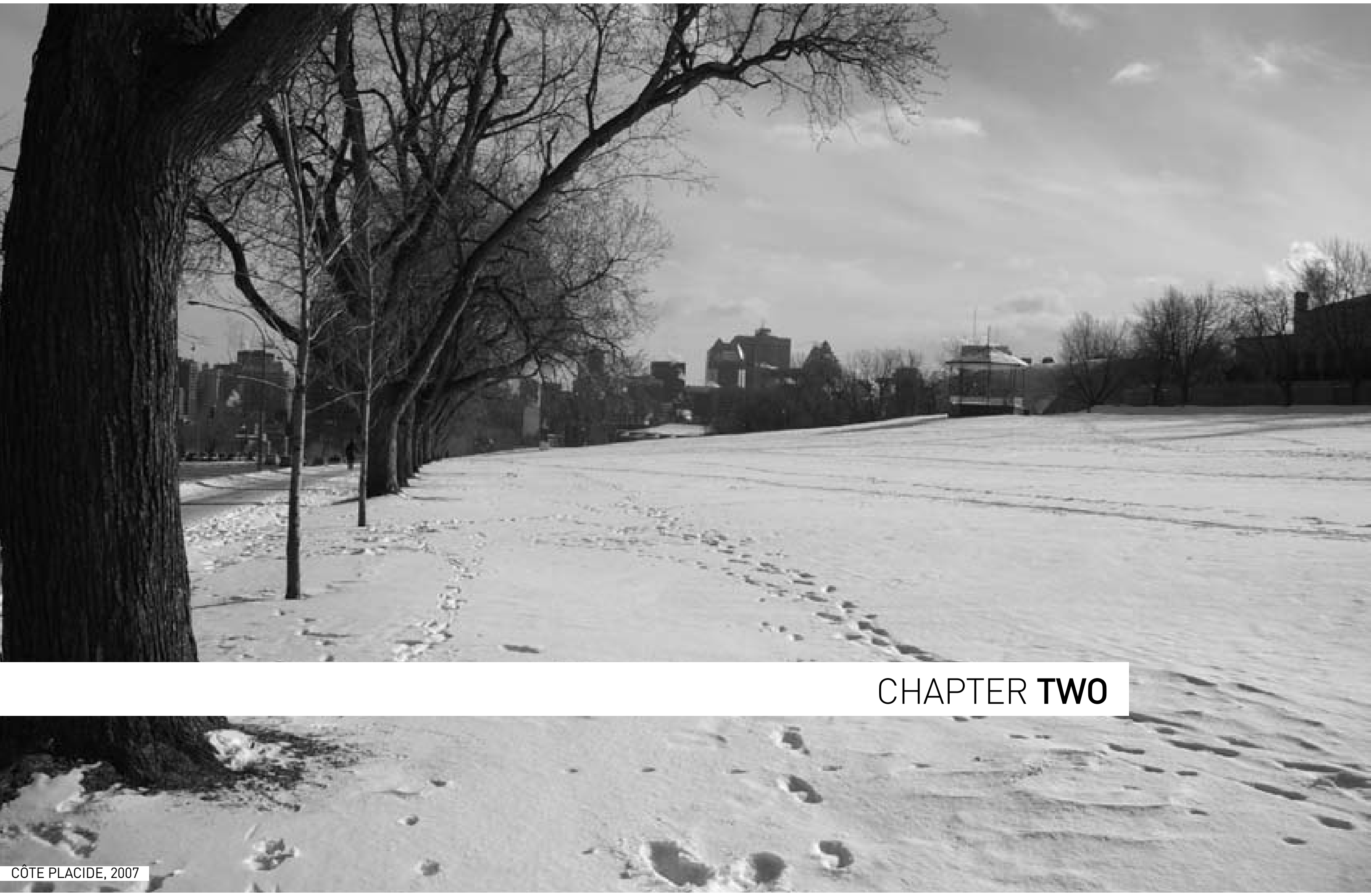
Montreal view from Mount Royal, E. Whitfield (1852)

Access to the landscapes he designed was also important to him. His intent was to meet human needs, and to that end he made his parks accessible to all--not only all social groups, but also all ages and all physical conditions. On Mount Royal itself, as part of the system of drives and walking paths that he planned, he included a path that went to the top of the mountain and returned by another route that could be used by convalescents in wheelchairs.

The legacy that Olmsted left behind addressed a wide range of social and psychological needs. There were great parks and scenic reservations, including Mount Royal; park systems with their parkways, as in Boston, Buffalo, and Louisville; regional plans, such as the street system for the Bronx in New York City and the metropolitan park system in Boston; residential communities, such as Riverside near Chicago and Druid Hills in Atlanta; academic campuses, as Stanford University in California and Lawrenceville School in New Jersey; the grounds of public institutions, including the grounds of the U.S. Capitol; institutions dedicated to serving the mentally ill, as the Hartford Retreat in Connecticut, or McLean Asylum near Boston; sites of public festivities, such as the Great White City of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1892; and private estates serving public functions, including the extensive Biltmore Estate in North Carolina, with its landmark demonstration of scientific forestry.

During the half-century after Olmsted's retirement, his stepson and partner John C. Olmsted and his son and namesake Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., created hundreds of important spaces in the United States and Canada. These included the park systems of Baltimore, Denver, Seattle, Portland, Oregon and Washington, D.C, as well as Essex and Union counties in New Jersey, and Audubon Park in New Orleans and Fort Tryon Park in Manhattan, and the expanded South Park system of Chicago. The firm did extensive broad-scale planning, including the Colorado River basin, the California Redwood forests, and the California State park system. They planned extensive residential developments, including Forest Hills Gardens in New York City, Lake Wales in Florida, Palos Verdes near Los Angeles, the Uplands in Seattle and the 4,700-acre development of British Pacific Properties in West Vancouver.

By these means, Olmsted defined the practice of landscape design in North America and influenced its later practice more than any other person.



CHAPTER **TWO**

CÔTE PLACIDE, 2007

THE PLACE OF MOUNT ROYAL IN OLMSTED'S CAREER

Olmsted's designing of Mount Royal came at a crucial point in his career. It was the first major public park that he designed following the end of his partnership with Calvert Vaux in 1872, and it came as he began to design the Back Bay Fens, the first element of the Boston "*Emerald Necklace*". At Mount Royal, Olmsted sought to emphasize the mountain aspect of the site, and urged Montrealers to abandon their prior expectations for a park with floral and horticultural displays. He sought to base the experience of the park on its natural setting, while at the same time providing greater variety of landscape experience and vistas than existed by natural growth. He also created a coherent, well-engineered circulation system that facilitated access by carriage, on foot, and even by wheelchair.

His approach at this same time to the tidal estuary of the Back Bay in Boston showed his concern for similar issues. He solved a series of sanitary engineering problems on the site while re-instating the tidal salt marshes common to the Massachusetts coast. He warned that the site should not be turned into a decorative, high-maintenance horticultural display like the already existing Public Garden in Boston. At the same time he emphasized encouragement of natural flora and fauna, including nesting places for birds and development of an aquatic collection of fish. Access to the site for recreational purposes was important, and he constructed carriage drives, walks, and a bridle path along the margins of the Fens, and planned for a circuit of water-buses that would run the 2 miles from one end to the other.

A third commission from this period in Olmsted designing of parks had similar qualities—this was Belle Isle in Detroit. Here again, as with Mount Royal and the Back Bay, Olmsted refused to refer to his commission as a "park" Instead, in this case he was planning an island, and he simply called it "Belle Isle." He concentrated most of the structures at the end of the island nearest the city, where the docks for ferry boats were to be provided, and devoted most of the rest of the island to a broad, open meadow and a considerable extent of forest. Each of these plans demonstrated Olmsted's remarkable imagination in developing a design from the particular character of the site, and each became a significant element in his career as a designer of public parks.

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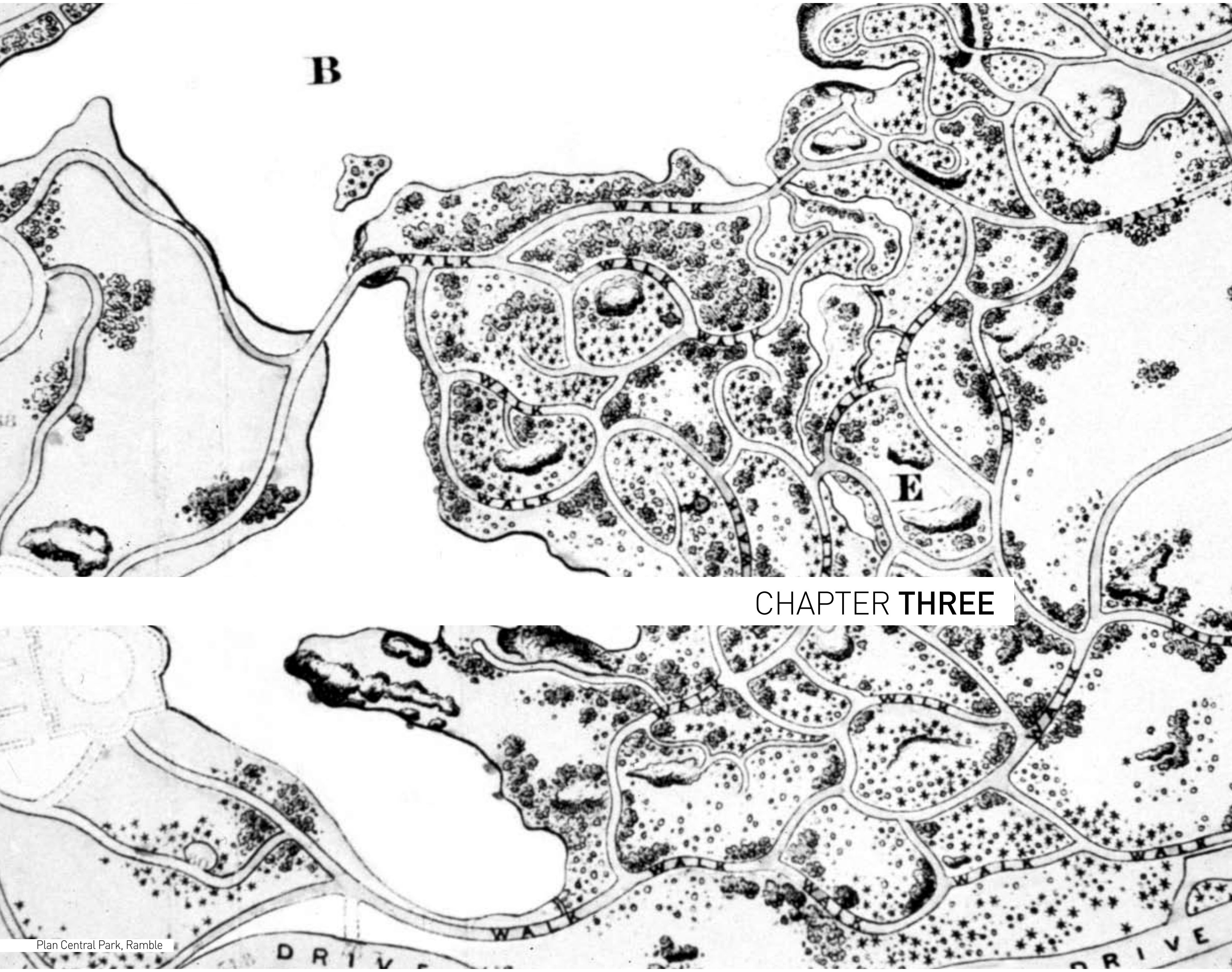
CHAPTER **THREE**



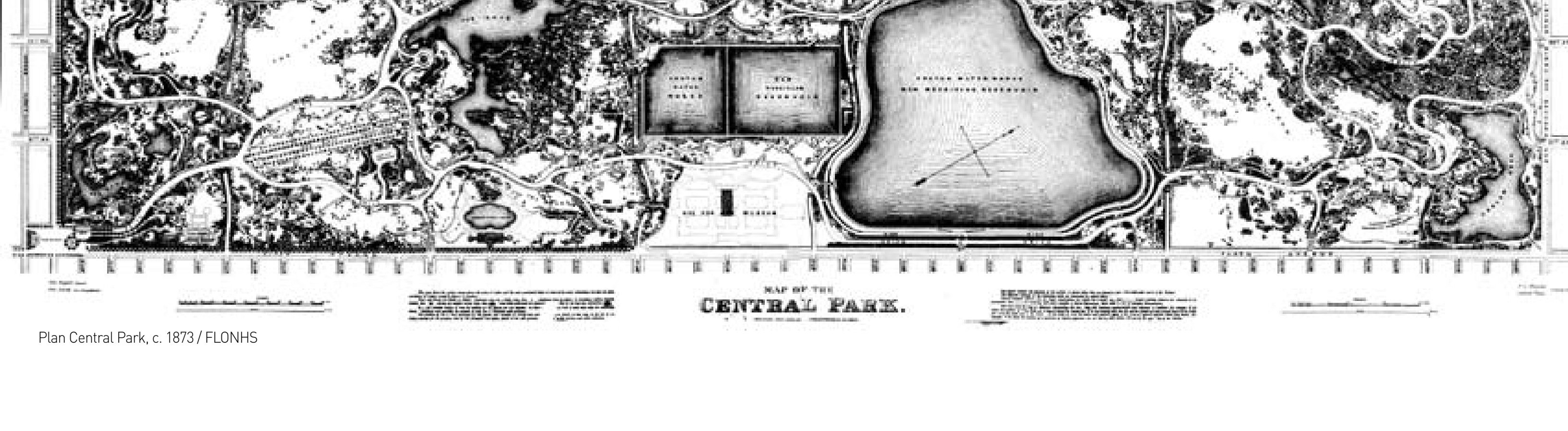
Plan Central Park, Ramble

THE PLACE OF MOUNT ROYAL IN THE PARK DESIGNING LEGACY OF FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED

Mount Royal is one of seven urban parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted that constitute his major contribution to that form of landscape art and social institution. They demonstrate his approach to a varied series of landscape settings, while at the same time they embody the underlying elements of his design approach. The ecological condition of all the original sites of the parks he designed had been significantly altered by human occupation and activity by the time they were selected for public use; they were not pristine wilderness. In those places, Olmsted sought to provide a varied and extensive experience of natural scenery, of nature enhanced by art. His intention in each case was to provide the greatest possible benefit to park users through immersion in restorative and therapeutic passages of landscape. Such experience, he believed, was the most profound and effective antidote to the stress of urban life.

In applying his art to the park sites, Olmsted sought to achieve an overall coherence and unity of effect, coupled with a variety of experience that enriched the whole. In so doing, he utilized the skills of allied professions--especially those of horticulture, engineering, and architecture. In the areas of conception, design, and construction, however, the landscape architect was to act as the master professional. Two aspects of Olmsted's approach were especially notable, and consistent. One was his extensive alteration of the site, even to the point of transformation, of the site. Taking the theme of the special character of the place as his guide, he changed both terrain and vegetation in order to achieve visual effects and psychological experiences that were more coherent, more distinctive, than those that nature unassisted would produce.

The second aspect was Olmsted's provision of access to the landscape he designed. He made the scenery accessible by a variety of modes of travel and in a way that made the landscape easily accessible, without destruction to it, in all weathers and all seasons. In the discussion that follows, the parks are presented in the order that they were created: the treatment of Mount Royal is intended simply to place that park in its setting within Olmsted's oeuvre. A more comprehensive consideration of Mount Royal is offered in a separate section.



Plan Central Park, c. 1873 / FLONHS

CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK

Olmsted's first urban park, which he and his partner Calvert Vaux began to design in 1857/58, was Central Park in New York City. Of the rocky, swampy site in the center of Manhattan, he observed that there was no other area of equal size on the island that "*possessed less of . . . the most desirable characteristics of a park, or upon which more time, labour and expense would be required to establish them.*" [1] He and Vaux accepted the ruggedness of the terrain in the twenty blocks below the reservoirs that occupied the center of the site, and created their most dramatic examples of "Picturesque scenery," surrounding boulders with dense plantings of shrubs, vines, brambles, and ground cover. They transformed the swamps into ponds and a lake while clearing ledges to increase the ruggedness of the setting.

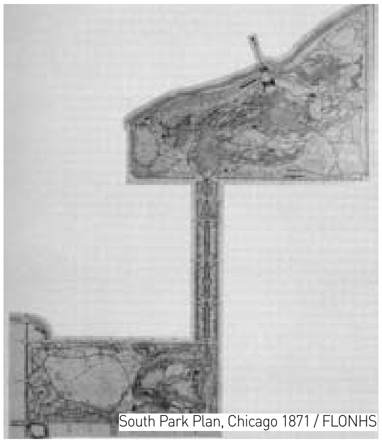
The section of the park nearest the built-up city was little suited for the open, gently rolling terrain of traditional park landscape. In consequence, Olmsted and Vaux expended more funds for the blasting and filling required to create the Sheep Meadow than they did for any other landscape feature of the park. The construction of walks, bridle paths, and drives, and the four sunken cross-park transverse roads, was a major element in the creation of the park as well. The moving of rocks and soil for these features, amounting to four million cubic yards and achieved by blasting with 260 tons of gun powder, was equal--Olmsted later estimated-- to altering the whole surface of the site by four feet. [2]

PROSPECT PARK, BROOKLYN

The site of Olmsted and Vaux's second urban park, Prospect Park in Brooklyn, which they began to design in 1865, was far better suited to their purposes than the area of Central Park had been. A glacial ridge ran through the property, on one side of which was flat farmland well suited for creating a lake, while on the other side open fields and gravel pits were easily re-graded to produce the long meadow, the most fully realized ¨*pastoral*¨ landscape they ever created. It remains today the most instructive example of the treatment that Olmsted proposed for the Glades section of Mount Royal.

A simple division of the Prospect Park site into three unconnected sections—meadow, woods, and lake—was not sufficiently varied or coherent. To solve the problem, the designers cut a steep-sided ravine through the ridge and constructed an artificial waterway beginning as a series of pools next to the meadow and then flowing over rapids and falls to the lake below. The water for this stream was supplied by a great steam-powered pump that drew from a deep well. As with Central Park, engineering was employed to create a natural-appearing but highly constructed landscape feature.

Plan Prospect Park, 1871- FLONHS



South Park Plan, Chicago 1871 / FLONHS

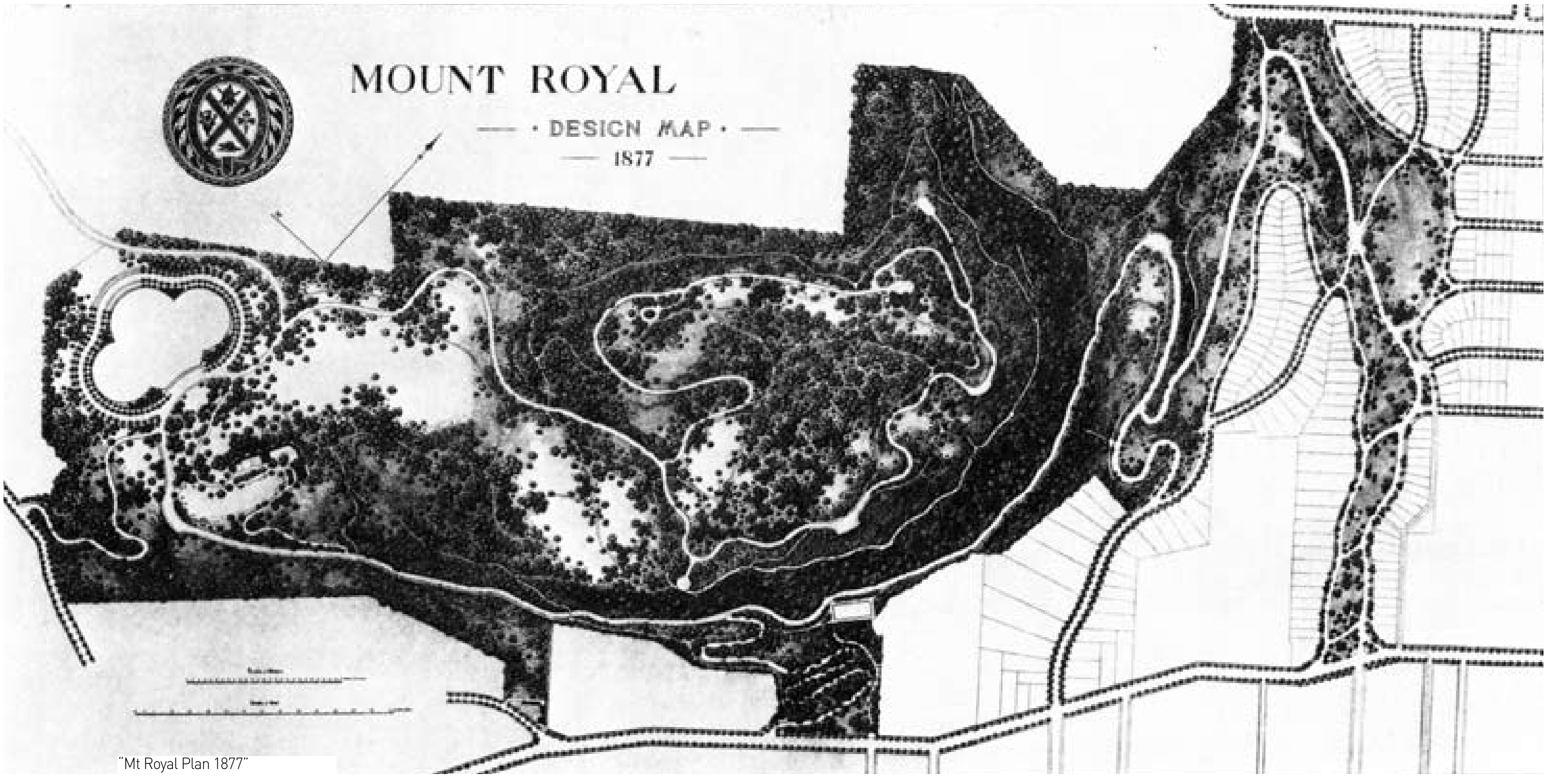
South Park, Chicago, 2006

SOUTH PARK, CHICAGO

For their next great park, the South Park of Chicago, Olmsted and Vaux again used water features to unify three very different, even disparate, sections. The thousand-acre park site consisted of an inland meadow and lakeside area of beach, sand dune and swamp, which were connected by a narrow strip 700 feet wide and nearly a mile long. In their plan, Olmsted and Vaux proposed to create ponds in the inland section along with picnic areas and hundred-acre meadow; these then connected to the lakeside section via a formal canal.

The marsh near Lake Michigan would be dredged to create an intricate shoreline and scattered islands in extensive lagoons. With this plan, the designers conceived the first example of the "*Prairie River*" that would become the iconic accomplishment of Midwestern landscape architects such as Jens Jensen and O.C. Simonds a full generation later. (After, that is, Olmsted finally realized the concept of 1871 in the lagoon and Wooded Isle of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893). But the concept of these lagoons was not simply to mimic the rivers and marshes of the Midwest. Rather, it was to create in the harsh climate and cold waters of Lake Michigan a landscape whose lushness and profusion evoked the richness of vegetation of more southern climes. "... *you can make shores as intricate, as arborescent and as densely overhung with foliage as any*," Olmsted assured Chicagoans in his original report of 1871, adding that "*if you cannot reproduce the tropical forest in all its mysterious depths of shade and visionary reflections of light, you can secure a combination of the fresh and healthy nature of the North with the restful, dreamy nature of the South*. . . ." [3].

The landscape character of the two principal sections of the South Park drew from the natural setting--prairie and lakeside marsh. But in each case the designers fused them with classic landscapes and the beneficent qualities they possessed: on the one hand the graceful, undulating terrain and openness of the English pastoral park, and on the other the intense richness and profusion of nature in subtropical and tropical places.



"Mt Royal Plan 1877"

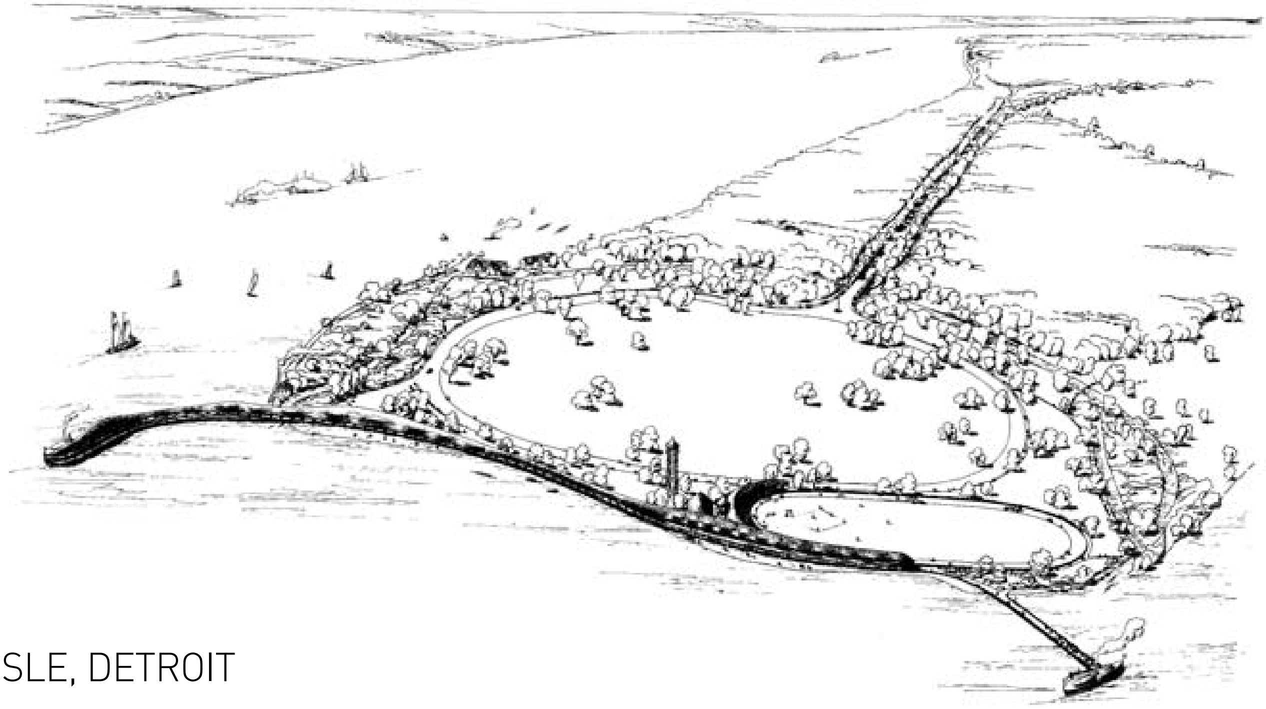
Campus McGill, 1873

MOUNT ROYAL, MONTREAL

Olmsted and Vaux's plans for the Chicago South Park were not realized until a quarter-century later, being postponed due to thgreat Chicago Fire of 187l and the economic depression that followed the Panic of 1873, thsame hard times that slowed construction of the park on Mount Royal. Olmsted therefore had seen only partial construction of the inland section, now called Washington Park, before he began to plan Mount Royal. His opportunity in this instance was to realize the full potential of a mountain as a public landscape and place for restorative enjoyment of scenery.

His approach will be discussed in a later section of this report: suffice it to say that the mountain and its northern situation offered a distinctly different challenge and opportunity from the earlier parks he had planned with Calvert Vaux in New York, Brooklyn, and Chicago. Mount Royal was also the first commission for a public park that Olmsted undertook without Vaux. Their partnership ended in 1872, although they continued to work together on New York City and Brooklyn parks for another two years.

Birds eye view of Belle Isle with 'gallery' in foreground



BELLE ISLE, DETROIT

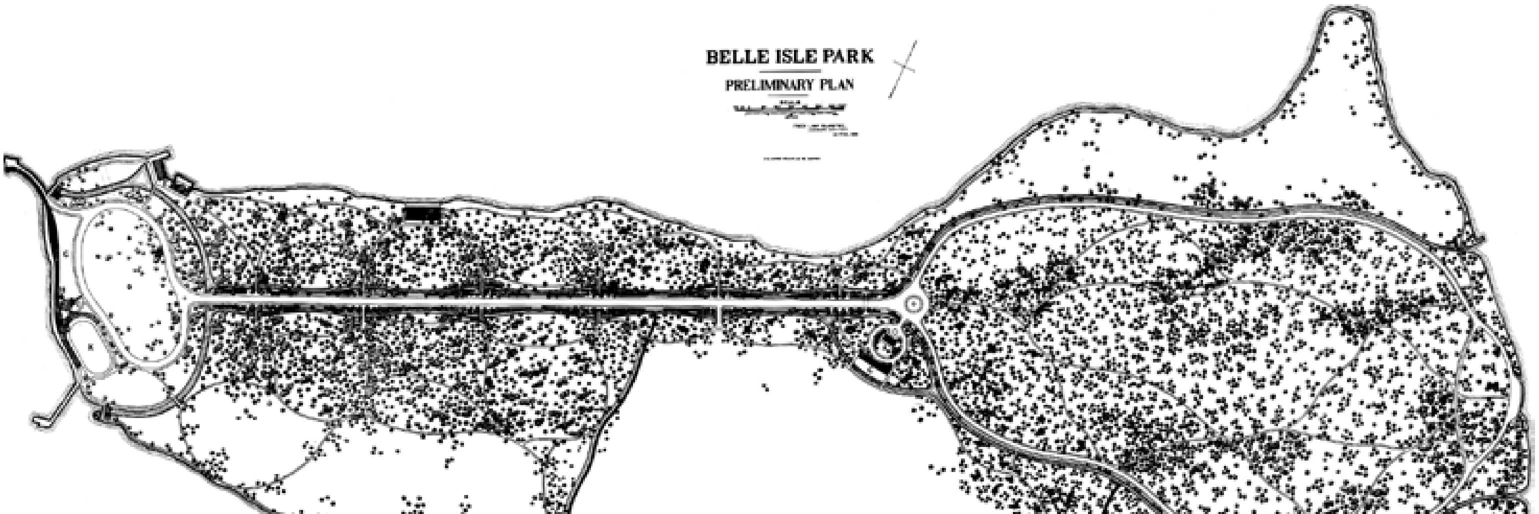
Olmsted's first major park design after Mount Royal began in 1881, the year that he published his report describing his plan for the mountain. In contrast to the Montreal site, the Detroit park site was a flat, low-lying and poorly drained island in the narrow thoroughfare [or Lake St. Clair] between Lake Huron and Lake Erie. But as with Mount Royal he refused to call his creation a park. In Montreal he was designing for a mountain, and in Detroit for an island, and in both cases the key to the design was not the traditional feature of a park.

At Belle Isle the principal landscape feature that Olmsted proposed to emphasize and enhance was the extensive area of woods on the island. Properly pruned and cleared, he asserted, the woods promised in a few years time to provide "*elements of sylvan scenery of a far nobler type and character*" than New York had been able to produce in Central Park at great expense. It was a noble ambition, he assured the people of Detroit, to maintain a forest so that it grew richer from year to year in "*sylvan picturesqueness and sylvan stateliness.*"[4] The greatest difficulty of the site, which called for the principal engineering feature, was the water-saturated soil.

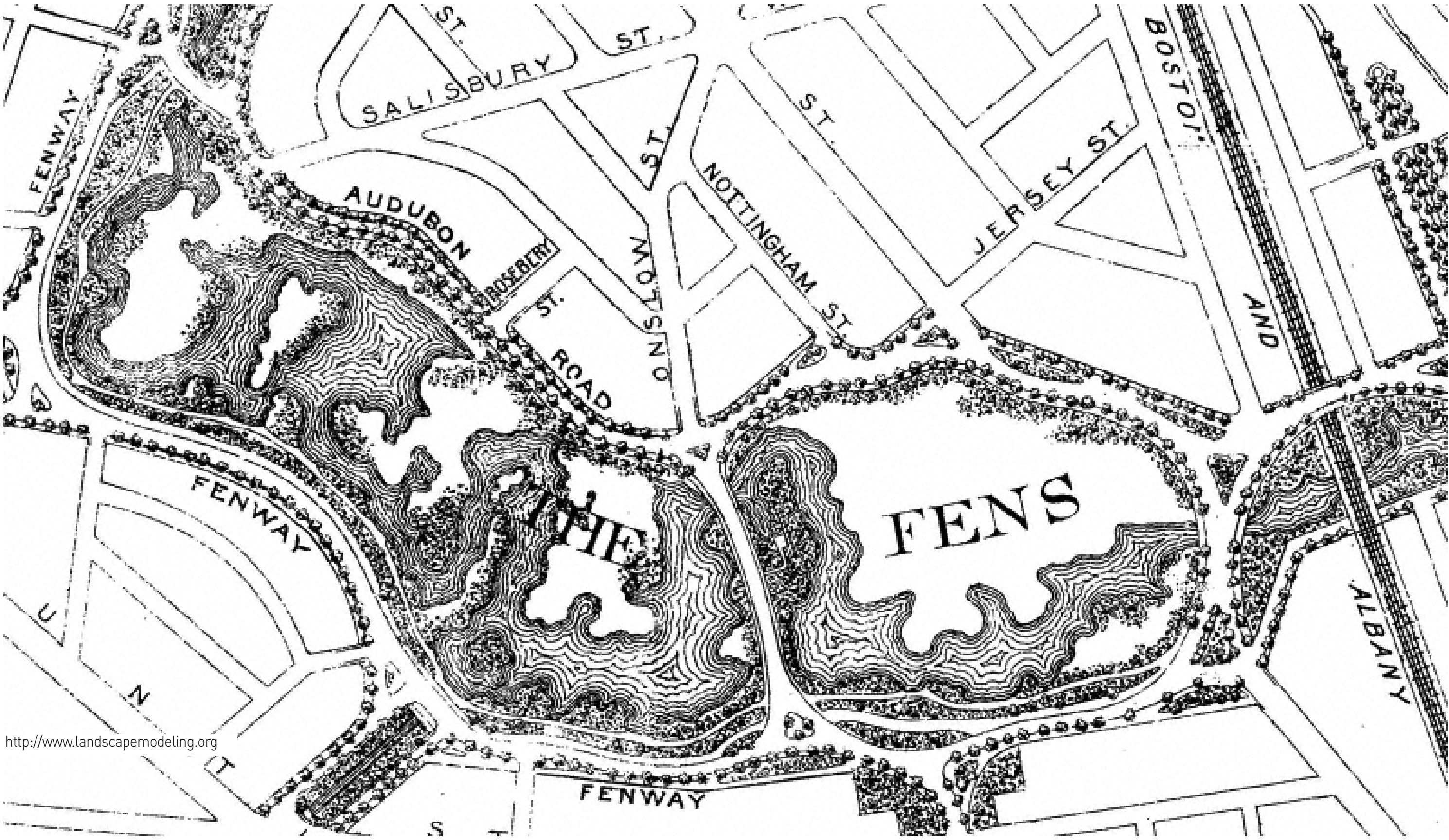
To address the problem, Olmsted proposed to construct a straight, formal drive down the middle of the island, flanked on either side by sinuous canals that then encircled the large area of woods that made up most of the western end of Belle Isle. Wind-powered pumps would periodically empty the canals, thereby draining the soil making it possible to establish an eighty-acre meadow, which he called ''*The Prairie.*'' It would be the site for military parades and other large civic gatherings, while at other times it would be simply a large expanse of meadow, grazed by sheep.

In order to preserve most of the island for open forest, Olmsted planned to concentrate most structures and entertainments for crowds at the end of the island closest to the city. There would be numerous festive structures, and the prime building was a remarkable sixteen-hundred-foot-long, shingle-style structure that would serve as a multi-level dock for ferry boats carrying visitors to and from the park, a shaded arcade along a bathing beach and a sports stadium. [5]

Belle Isle, 2007



Plan préliminaire de Belle Isle, Détroit, 1883



http://www.landscapemodeling.org

MUDDY RIVER AND BACK BAY FENS, BOSTON

In 1878, the year after Olmsted completed his plan for Mount Royal, he began the work on the Boston park system that would continue until the end of his career. His first project was a noxious, polluted tidal marsh along the Charles River uncomfortably close to the fashionable neighbourhood that had developed on the newly filled land of the Back Bay. Olmsted was charged with creating a recreation ground on this site that could also help to control flooding caused by the two streams flowing into it--Stony Brook and the Muddy River. Following his earlier approach when dealing with sites not suited for traditional park-like treatment, he refused to call the area Back Bay Park, as the park commissioners had done. Instead, he warned against conceiving of it as a place for elegant, decorative treatment like the Boston Public Garden, or in any similar way.

He insisted on calling it the Back Bay Fens, and planned it to be as similar to a salt marsh as conditions and needs would permit. Working closely with the Boston city engineer, he planned a tidal gate that would keep the sewage-saturated mud flats permanently covered with salt water from the tidal Charles River. This tide gate made possible a reduced, one-foot tide for twice-daily movement of water within the basin it created, and for holding flood waters at high tide on the river during storms. Since it was necessary for the basin to hold flood water, the vegetation had to survive periodic immersion.

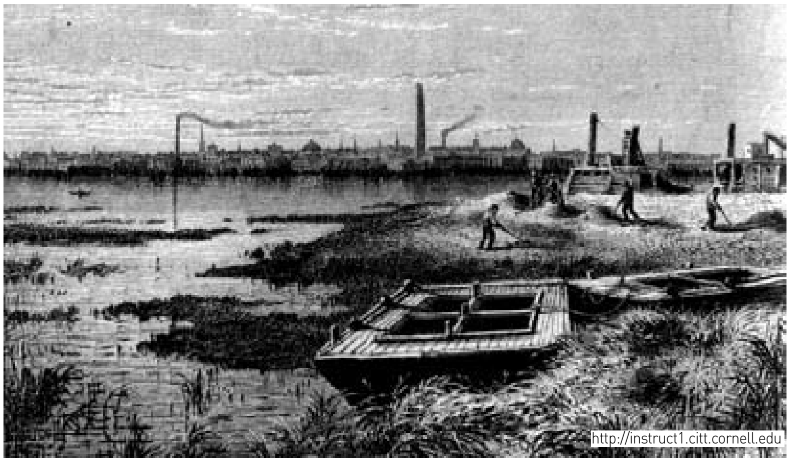
To protect the shores from erosion by surf, Olmsted created a series of low-lying islands covered with plants that would slow the movement of water during storms. And since the Fens were to be a public recreation ground, he dredged a sinuous watercourse between the low headlands and islands for use by rowboats and canoes. He also proposed a water taxi that would carry visitors on a two-mile circuit of the Fens.

For enjoyment of the scenery he constructed walking paths, and a mile-long bridle path. Along both shores he carried carriage drives that provided access to the scenery of the Fens and to major streets around it. Although in time the Back Bay Fens came to have the appearance of a wild salt marsh, it was in fact a highly complex construction with special arrangement for sanitation, flood control, naturalistic scenery, and vehicular circulation. [6]

Once his plan for the Back Bay Fens was completed, Olmsted proposed to use the upper Muddy River for the next section of parks and parkways in what came to be called Boston's "emerald necklace." For many years, he had been urging cities to take possession of urban stream valleys for public recreation--pointing out their wasteful misuse as dumping grounds or their burial in culverts. The Muddy River section of the Boston park system was Olmsted's first and last opportunity to demonstrate the benefit that a city could gain from enlightened treatment of its streams. Emphasizing the multiple purposes of the improvements he conceived, Olmsted called this section the "*Muddy River Sanitary Improvement*."

Like the Fens, it was to serve for sanitary engineering, flood control, scenic recreation, and transportation. He blocked the salt water of the Fens at its upper end, converting the Muddy River into a freshwater stream flowing directly into the Charles River. For flood control he dredged the largest swamp along the river, converting it into Leverett Pond that served both as a landscape feature and as a holding area for flood waters. He made the rest of the streambed deeper and wider, altering its angular course for a gently curving one. As he reconstructed the stream valley he added a carriage drive, a bridle path, and pedestrian paths. He then drew up plans for the planting of trees, shrubs, and other vegetation that in time achieved the appearance he originally proposed of "*passages of rushy meadow and varied slopes; trees in groups, diversified by thickets and open glades.*" [7]

Muddy River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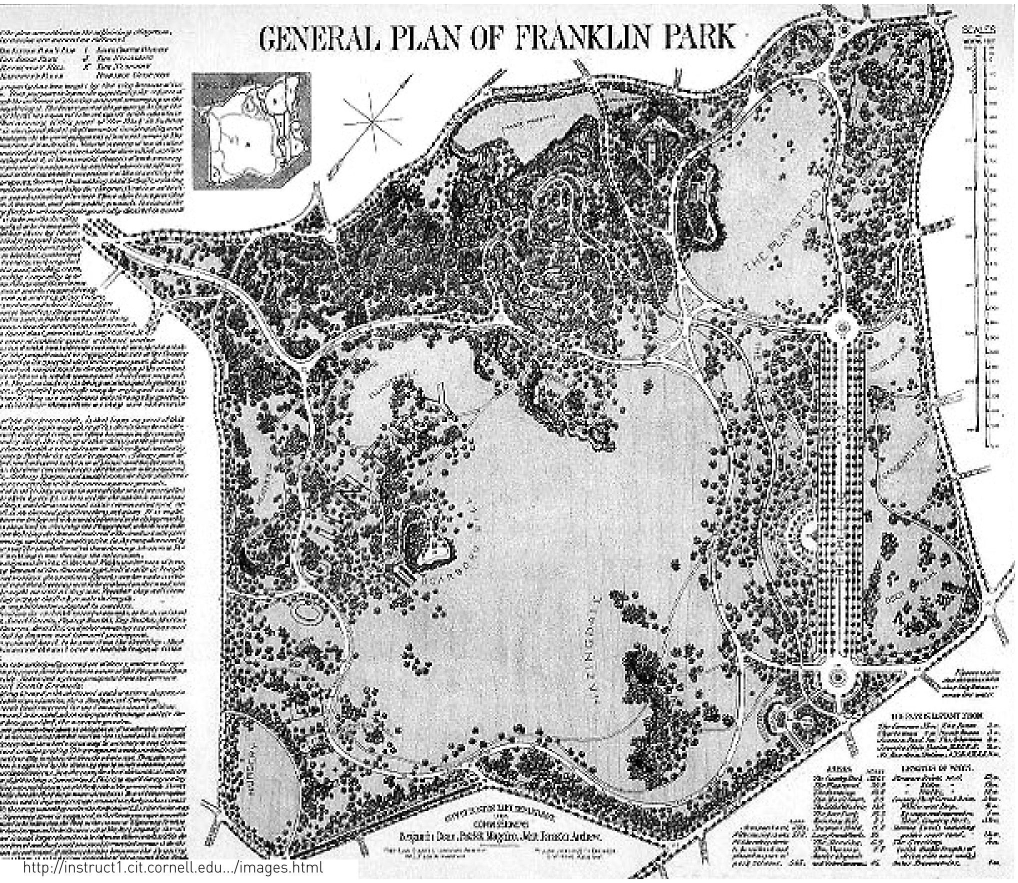

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Schoolmaster Hill, Franklin Park

FRANKLIN PARK, BOSTON

The last great urban park that Olmsted designed was Franklin Park, the single true "park" by Olmsted's definition, in the extensive Boston system. Since it was part of the larger system, Olmsted's approach was simpler than in those earlier instances where he was asked to design what was to be the single dominating feature of a city's public recreation facilities. The problem of securing adequate funding for a whole park system also acted to limit the expense of constructing any single element. [8]

Accordingly, Olmsted welcomed Franklin Park as the site in Boston best suited for a "country park." Grading of the two principal meadow areas and a limited amount of planting of trees and shrubs would serve to create the desired landscape effect. In his original report of 1885, Olmsted proposed to construct no water features, since so much of the proposed system focused on the Muddy River and Boston harbour.

The essential circulation system of carriage drives and pedestrian paths would constitute the principal expense of construction.[8] The special place in Olmsted's oeuvre held by Franklin Park lies in its demonstration of the role of architecture within the park setting.

One of the principal features was boulder-faced Ellicott Arch at one side of Ellicottdale, a massive structure with no ornamentation and its field stones nearly enveloped in creepers --realizing Olmsted's view that "*the beauty of designed sheets of foliage is thought to be better exhibited, and to have a more natural effect when thus disposed over a backing of rough and deeply crannied, rather than of flat and dressed stone.*"

Consequently, Olmsted used more of the plentiful supply of boulders on the Franklin Park site for the massive terrace he constructed overlooking the playing fields in the Playstead section of the park. There, as well, he placed

General view of Playstead with roof of Overlook Shelter

Ellicott Arch, Franklin Park

Playstead, Franklin Park

the building that most fully expressed his concept of the subordination of architecture to landscape scenery. The large Playstead Overlook shelter on the terrace served multiple uses, including those of a café and locker rooms. Viewed from nearby, the shadows cast by its overhanging roofs, coupled with the variety of shingle and stone construction and the total absence of architectural decoration, provided a kind of camouflage that greatly reduced its apparent size. From a distance, across the playing fields, it was hardly more intrusive--all that was clearly visible was the shingled roof, 120 feet in length, "*quiet and gray in tone like a huge rock, and with gentle convex curves.*" [9]

This shelter is a prime demonstration of Olmsted's creation of visually unified spaces free of intrusive and distracting decoration in the form of architectural elements or plantings. A third structure in Franklin Park completed this ensemble of picturesque yet visually recessive structures. On the side of Schoolmaster Hill was a series of picnic areas constructed of boulders and set into the hillside, shaded by simple wooden vine-covered arbours. At one end stood a small stone shelter with a thatched roof of eccentric shape: "*curve and quiddle, twist, undulation, hog's back, dormers, gable and pent*," as Olmsted described them. [10]

Previously, Delaware Park in Buffalo (1870) had that quality of simplicity, since many recreational activities could be provided for in the Front and the Parade, as well as the wide, connecting parkways. The same would hold true in Olmsted's later planning of the park systems (beginning in 1888) of Rochester, N.Y., and Louisville, Kentucky, each with three elements of nearly equal importance. In those instances the pastoral parks--Genesee Valley Park and Cherokee Park respectively, could be planned with far less transformation of the site than Olmsted proposed for Central and Prospect parks and Belle Isle.

BELLE ISLE, DETROIT

CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK

MUDDY RIVER, BOSTON

PROSPECT PARK, BROOKLYN

Mount Royal is one of seven urban parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted that constitute his major contribution to that form of landscape art and social institution.

FRANKLIN PARK, BOSTON

MOUNT ROYAL, MONTRÉAL

SOUTH PARK, CHICAGO

CONCLUSION

These seven examples, then, make up Olmsted's major contribution to the designing of urban parks. In each there was a special situation and site from which he drew a unique design solution. They stand as of equal importance, each providing in its own fashion a demonstration of Olmsted's distinctive and imaginative approach to the creation of parks and each displays certain characteristics common to all of Olmsted park designs.

First, there is the emphasis on recognizing and respecting the "spirit of the place"—the unique scenic quality of the area set aside for the park. Then there is Olmsted's willingness to alter many aspects of the existing site in order to produce a more powerful landscape experience, and to provide adequate access. In the process, Olmsted made extensive use of the native vegetation of the region and then broadened his plant palette by introducing non-invasive plants that were not native to the site but that enriched the landscape experience. He combined art and nature in a way that enhanced the "charm of natural scenery," and made it available as a refreshing and restorative resource for the city dweller.

CHAPTER **FOUR**

OLMSTED'S VISION FOR MOUNT ROYAL

In a manner similar to the one he adopted in dealing with Belle Isle and the Back Bay Fens, Olmsted made it clear from the outset at Montreal that no attempt should be made to create a park, as usually understood, on the mountain. "*As a general rule rugged and broken ground is the last that should be chosen for a public recreation ground in the immediate vicinity of a large city,*" he wrote in his first report to the park commissioners. "*It is unnecessary that I should show the objections to it: the simple fact that your property differs so greatly in its topographical characteristics from ground which would be generally & properly described as 'park-like' raises a sufficient presumption that it is unsuitable for a park.*" [11] Instead, it was the mountain character of the site that should provide the "*leading purpose*" for treatment of the ground. Unnecessary features and decorative elements should be avoided: improvements should be simple and inexpensive. Nor was Olmsted satisfied with the condition of the mountain as he found it. The great value of the mountain, he asserted again and again, was the value of its natural scenery. Mount Royal possessed opportunities for producing effects of natural scenery superior to those of any other city in the land taken for public parks, but those advantages were "*as yet inert and unproductive.*" To allow the mountain to be so used that those scenic opportunities were lost, he declared, would be "*a scandalous extravagance.*" But it would require a clear and steady purpose to realize the full potential of the site. [12]

The crucial element of value, the quality that would be by far the most beneficial for the users of the mountain, was "charm"--the charm of natural scenery, the "*intrinsic value of charming natural scenery.*" [13] This quality of scenery, Olmsted believed, was the most effective remedy for the harmful influences and stress of urban life. It acted in an almost mysterious and magical way to achieve that transformation--"*to lift us out of our habitual condition into one which. . . we should recognize as poetic.*" [14] Such profound and restorative experience of landscape was the chief purpose of all of Olmsted's park design, whether in the wilds of the Central Park Ramble, the flowing terrain of Prospect Park's Long Meadow, or the wooded heights of Mount Royal. The key was the possibility of immersion in the landscape in a way that allowed it to work its therapeutic effect through a process that he called "*unconscious.*" Scenery, he taught, has "*an effect on the human organism by an action of what it presents to view, which action, like that of music, is of a kind that goes back of thought, and cannot be fully given the form of words.*" [15]

In its condition in 1874, however, Mount Royal was not able to provide the needed benefit to the people of Montreal. To realize its promise, two things were needed: the application of landscape art to alter and enrich the vegetation on the mountain, and the employment of landscape art and engineering to create the drives and walks needed to make the scenery accessible to large numbers of visitors. This was the transformation of the site that Olmsted proposed in order to realize the full potential of Mount Royal: not the blasting and digging that had created the Sheep Meadow in Central Park, or the massive excavation of earth that had produced the Ravine in Prospect Park, or the dredging required for the canals on Belle Isle or the waterways and islands in the Back Bay Fens. Rather, the transformation of the mountain was to be achieved by extensive alteration of plant materials.

PLANT MATERIALS AND SCENIC EFFECT

In part Olmsted's purpose was to heighten the mountain character of the site. He proposed to plant the lowest area, the Cote Placide, with tall shade trees characteristic of more southern regions, creating scenery distinctly different from the rugged summit of the mountain. In the area above the Cote Placide, which he called the Piedmont, Olmsted wished to plant such lowland trees as oaks, bass-wood, butternut, ash, cherry, and red maple, arranging them near rocky outcroppings and interspersing them with broad open areas of turf. In forming the groups of tree, he directed, species should be selected that formed "*soft and harmonious outlines together,*" heightening the contrast of this area with the fells and crags higher on the mountain. To increase the contrast even further, he proposed to replace the stunted oaks on the summit with trees native to more severe climates. This approach would increase the apparent distance, in terms of both vegetation and scenery, between the bottom of Mount Royal and its top.

An even more important consideration than increasing the mountain-like character of Mount Royal was the variety of landscape experience that Olmsted's proposed treatment made possible. Each section of the mountain--Cote Placide, Piedmont, Underfell, Cragsfoot, Brackenfell, Glades, Crags, and Upperfell--would have its special qualities, to be experienced in a seamless progression through the four-mile passage from Bleury Street to the "Crown of the Mountain" with its six-hundred-foot change in elevation. The circuit drives in Olmsted's other parks flowed through a variety of landscapes, from open meadow through rocky areas, from low ponds to high overlooks. But in no other was there such a carefully planned progression of scenes as he envisioned for Mount Royal, "*successive incidents of a sustained landscape poem, to each of which the mind is gradually and sweetly led up, and from which it is gradually and sweetly led away, so that they become a part of a consistent experience.*" [16]

Olmsted's design concept was not to create a series of ecosystems, if that were possible, nor to recover the "natural" vegetative pattern of the mountain that would have existed without human intervention through cutting and fire and the random introduction of non-native species.

In the "*poor, thin and arid*" soil of the exposed Upperfell, for instance, the "*most elevated, exposed, Arctic, and continuously rocky*" section, he proposed to replace the "*dwarfed, feeble, and sickly*" deciduous trees with other species native to more severe situations that would nonetheless thrive there--scrubby pines and firs, along with birches, hornbeams and hawthorns. [17]

Overall, Olmsted proposed to secure a unity within each of the eight topographical divisions of the mountain, "*each possessing natural characteristics distinguishing it from those adjoining,*" by applying the following principal of plant selection: "*It is to so select the material of planting, or the native material to be left growing, that, within reasonable limits, the principle upon which Nature, unassisted, proceeds in her selections (though often very imperfectly) shall be emphasized, idealized, or made more apparent in landscape quality.*" [18]

The overwhelming number of trees, shrubs, and other plants that Olmsted recommended for use in each of the sections of Mount Royal were native to North America. But even so he remained true to his belief that his planting palette should always be open to enrichment by non-native plants that would thrive in the microclimate being dealt with. Neither nationalistic pride nor ecological accuracy was the controlling consideration. All plant materials must be able to thrive with no special tending, and they must not appear exotic and out of place to other than knowledgeable botanists. One of the few examples of Olmsted's proposed enrichment of the Mount Royal landscape was his recommendation of trying the Japanese yew *Taxus adpressa*, a shrub that would complement the native groundcover Canadian yew. [19] He also ordered "*Siberian trees*" from Scotland. [20]

Among other trees he wished to plant were Norway maples, which proved to be so invasive. Knowledge of the hardiness of many species was still not known and his choice of plant materials was always experimental, subject to adjustment as the ability of a given species to thrive or spread was demonstrated.

. "Plan 609-17" / FLONHS

CIRCULATION SYSTEM

A crucially important aspect of the design for the mountain was the carriage drive and adjoining pedestrian walk from bottom to top that would lead visitors through the series of landscapes that Olmsted proposed to develop. The park was to be experienced as a series of "*successive incidents of a sustained landscape poem*," following a gradual, curving course that heightened the pleasure of the visit. [21] The drive must be gradual enough to permit steady and rapid movement along it, never exceeding a five per cent grade. Accordingly, Olmsted rejected the steep switch-back entrance drive already constructed up to the McTavish Monument from Peel Street. Instead, the drive of choice would enter the park at the intersection of Bleury Street and avenue des Pins and follow a curving route through an area now occupied by avenue du Parc. The first long section of this drive, reaching nearly to present-day site of *lac aux Castors*, was constructed as a public works project to allay unemployment resulting from the Panic of 1873. The construction was carried out during the winter of 1875-76 without consulting Olmsted's plans and instructions. While it supplied the gradual grades that Olmsted had desired, it met none of his other criteria. He was particularly distressed by the "*rude, artificial character of the cuttings and embankments on either side*":

He had hoped to have a nearly vertical rock face on the inner side of the road and a "berm bank" pushed out on the other side, enhancing the view over the surrounding countryside and causing the least possible damage to the terrain immediately below the road. The wide swath cut by construction meant, he found, that it would be very difficult and expensive "*to establish any beautiful character along the line of this road for many years to come.*"

The best solution would be to widen the roadway, add a broad walk along its outer side, and then plant an "irregular line of trees & bushes" on each side of it. [22] The drive was laid out in some places on a less curving course than was desirable, its course "open to view and excessively prominent far ahead, dissecting and distracting the landscape." To ensure the gradual opening of the vista ahead as one moved along the road--so fundamental a quality of Olmsted's carriage drives—the best solution would be to widen the roadway by ten feet, add a broad walk along its outer side, and then plant an irregular line of trees and bushes "*on each side of the walk*". [23]

Olmsted was also distressed by the narrow boundary of the park along Sir Hugh Allan's property and the way that it restricted the design of the road up the mountain and limited the views from it. Speaking of the private property next to the park, he wrote, « *Following my own judgment, I should have planned to sweep it entirely away, west of the east line of Sir Hugh Allan's grounds, and obtained a more economical arrangement at any necessary cost.* » [24]

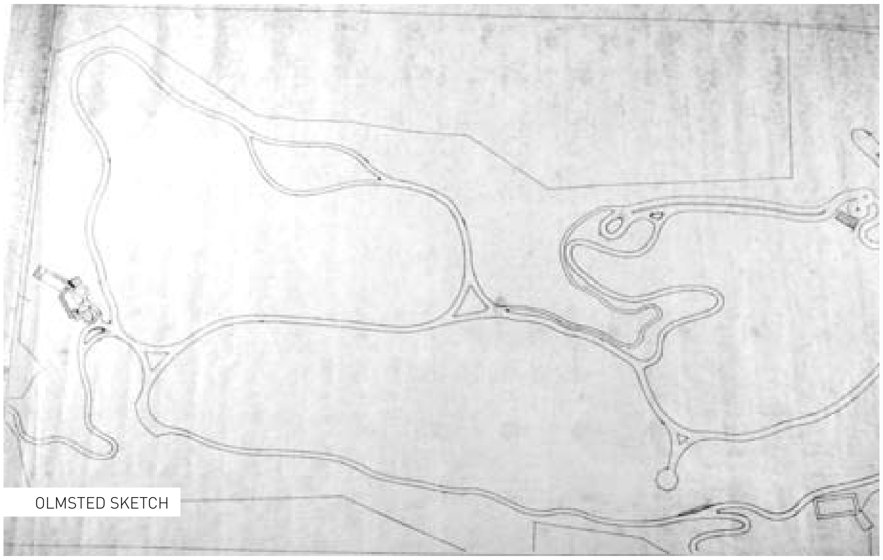
Fortunately, the drive from the Glades section to the summit, circling the Upperfell, was constructed in later years closely following Olmsted's plan. (The section constructed in the Glades section differs greatly from Olmsted's concept, which showed the drive descending to the reservoir, or pond, near present-day lac au Castors, and then curving through the area now occupied by the parking area near the *maison Smith*.)

The circulation system was particularly important at Mount Royal, since the experience of the entire progression to the summit was so central to Olmsted's

concept of the way the mountain should seen. The system of pedestrian paths that he envisioned was of equal importance. They allowed visitors to experience vistas from the top edge of the Crags, and facilitated movement on foot within the encircling carriage drive in both the Glades and Upperfell sections. Olmsted considered access to the mountain scenery by invalids and convalescents to be so important that he planned a route by which people in wheelchairs could ascend all the way to the summit, even returning by a different set of paths. The section of this path running uphill from the Underfell was apparently constructed at least in part, although its upper section, with several long switchbacks, was to be in the area occupied by the voie Camilien-Houde and the land outside the park to the west which is now part of Mount Royal Cemetery.

This path on Mount Royal was a prime expression of Olmsted's belief that the entire circulation system of a park should have grades as gradual as was feasible. As he said so eloquently in his report, it was important to "*cultivate the habit of thoughtful attention to the feebler sort of folk*," like old women and sick children as well as those confined to wheelchairs. The small improvements in design that resulted, he urged, "*will simply be that refinement of judgment which is the larger part of the difference between good and poor art, and the enjoyment of every man will be increased by it, though he may not know just how.*" [25]

Virtually all of Olmsted's parks and scenic reservations contained paths that made possible gradual ascent by wheelchairs to the principal vista-points, but nowhere did he propose a more impressive and challenging realization of that concept than on Mount Royal.



OLMSTED SKETCH

STRUCTURES

At Mount Royal, as with his other urban parks, Olmsted wished to avoid a proliferation of structures. The purpose of making the mountain accessible to the public for recreation, he firmly believed, was not to provide demonstrations of the art of architecture. Buildings and other structures should be added only for the purpose of making more pleasant the activities most suited to the mountain site. The one building that he always sought to include in his parks was a place where visitors could find food and refreshment, usually including wine and beer. His approach in the case of Mount Royal marks an important stage in his treatment of this issue. Olmsted proposed establishing three buildings on the mountain as shelters, resting places, and restaurants.

He planned to establish one of these in a protected part of the Brackenfell. This would be the single year-round restaurant for park users, protected from winter winds and reasonably accessible during the snow season.[26] Closer to the park entrance, at a concourse in the Underfell overlooking the first distant vista toward the north, Olmsted proposed to site a little inn. It would have supplies for picnicking parties and refreshments for convalescent park visitors who ventured no higher on the mountain. [27]

The third restaurant was the one that interested him most, and on which he expended considerable effort. This, the "*Crown of the Mountain*" structure, is discussed in the section on the Upperfell.

TREATMENT OF VEGETATION

Along the Carriage Drive in the Underfell and Brackenfell, there are three major areas of special interest for the issue of Olmsted's suggestions for planting new vegetation and maintaining the desired scenic effects. One issue is the scenery along the carriage drive and walk running up the mountain between the Piedmont and the Glades. This is the Crags as viewed from the drive along the Underfell, and the scenery in the Brackenfell section, beyond the switchback road from Peel Street. Concerning the view he sought to secure from the Underfell, Olmsted refers to "*the near crag-side decked with dark bushy evergreens and draped with creepers, mosses, and blooming Alpine plants*" while on the other side openings in the screen of leaves reveal "*a distant gleaming river and a sunny expanse beyond it.*" [28]

Having constructed the carriage drive in the midst of the mountain scenery, with all the destruction of natural terrain and vegetation that it entailed, it was necessary to do more than wait for time to heal the scars on the land. In his description, Olmsted indicated the role that artistic and aesthetic creativity could play in forming scenery in an area set aside for public recreation: "*You can shape the banks at once in such desirable forms as frost, and rain, and root growths might chance to give them after many years. You can do more. You can, by a little forecast, make them at one point bolder and more picturesque in contour by a fitting buttress of rock than nature, working alone, would be able to do." Inserting little pockets of leaf-mould about this rock, and proper seeds or plants, you can then prevail upon nature to dress it with characteristic mountain forms of foliage and bloom, more interesting than nature would, in a century, otherwise provide. You can put in the way of immediate growth behind this rock a broad dark mass of low mountain pine, or a pensive, feathery and brooding hemlock, educated to a character which nature, left alone, gives to one of its species in a thousand, to supply the degree of canopy and shadow which will be most effective for your purpose. And, this being done, you are finally relieved of the nuisance and expense which the natural washing down of your abrupt bank would have otherwise entailed.* [29]

In this way the scenery would be enhanced and erosion reduced. Elsewhere he indicated the importance of graceful grading, referring to the "ogee curve" that was an essential element of his shaping of ground: "*you can cut back on the crest of your bank and make it gentle and graceful, with long double curves of the surface, dressed with low, soft verdure and decked with modest wild flowers.*" [30]

BRACKENFELL

In the Brackenfell section he speaks of a more open wood, less steep-sided, with "*sunlight falling on ferny dells.*"[31] He proposed to retain the natural growth of trees there, maples in the lower parts, pines and birches higher up. He proposed simply to remove the poorer trees, creating more distinct groups and groves, along with careful pruning, and the addition of low bushes and ground cover. [32]

CRAGS

In general, Olmsted wished to give the steep, rocky face of the Crags a richer landscape character by making the soil less subject to erosion and the vegetation richer and more varied. In this way he hoped to recover the landscape character of an earlier time. In order to keep open views from the top, and to guard against damage from ice, he called for planting trees of low and compact growth, and the encouragement of the "native growth of low shrubs, and particularly of vines, brambles, and bracken." He particularly wished to introduce a variety of native sumacs, both for their shape and their "cheerful qualities of color," while for ground cover he proposed profuse planting of the Canadian yew. [33] This appears to be the middle region of the mountain where, in his more general description of desirable vegetation he recommended *the white and red pines and hemlock, the canoe and red birches, the rock, mountain, Norway, and moose maples, with underwood and thickets of rowans, wych-hazel, the native honeysuckles, wild currant, fragrant bramble, the Canadian redbud, sumacs, clethra, rhodora, and other thoroughly hardy and strong-growing shrubs.* [34]

And, finally, he said, they could cut out ugly and damaged trees, and prune others to make them more attractive and sturdier. "*Thus," he concluded, "you can rapidly establish a new face to the wood which will in truth be equally natural in aspect, and, whether regarded as the foreground of a distant view or looked at closely for its local beauty, far more charming than the best that nature, unencouraged, would much more slowly give you.*" [35] In this way Olmsted defined the combined role of engineering and landscape art that was needed to provide access to and through the scenery of the mountain.

GLADES

The Glades section was particularly important for Olmsted, since he saw it as the one section of the mountain where it would be possible to secure a passage of truly park-like "pastoral" scenery --a small area "*fortunately situated to serve as a foil, through its natural amenity and the simple, quiet, secluded and pastoral character which can be given it to the grandly bold and rugged heights and declivities of the main body.*"

His intent there was to have an extensive mountain meadow, with a naturalistic pond at its lower, western end--"*a piece of truly park-like ground, broad, simple, quiet and of a rich sylvan and pastoral character, forming a harmonious, natural foreground to the view over the Western valley and all in striking contrast to the ruggedness of the mountain proper.*" He wished it to be "*a perfectly natural basin of not more than four or five acres in extent with picturesque shores.*" [36] The decision of the city to place a reservoir of 8 to 12 acres in the place where he envisioned the pond required him to redesign the area. Doubtful that a water supply facility of that size would have a naturalistic appearance, he proposed to make the reservoir severely formal in shape and treatment. He then proposed to make it the site of an extensive (half-mile) promenade with separate areas for pedestrians, equestrians, and carriages--a feature that he had previously planned for the summit of the mountain.

Even with this change in design, he called especially for preservation of the view of the valley to the west, "a *broad vista being left open on the line of the shorter axis, disclosing the prospect over the valley beyond Cote des Neiges, across the water from the promenade on the East side and the hill in its rear.*" Elsewhere he urged that in order to secure the view

in the direction of the Cote des Neiges road east of the Catholic cemetery "*it will be necessary that the City guard strenuously against the erection of any building by which the view might be cut [off] or disturbed, which in that direction is so very lovely and distinct in character from all others to be enjoyed from the mountain.*" This is one of the few statements that Olmsted offered concerning the visual relation of the park to the rest of the mountain (other than his expressed desire to block views of the cemetery from the Upperfell, in order to retain a park-like character and experience there). [37]

As for other treatment of the Glades area, he wished it to be simple and consistent--restoring "*a natural face to the bordering woods, where they have been ill-used*" and securing "*the finest spread of turf on the continent,*" not lawn-like, but somewhat roughly shaped by a flock of sheep, in keeping with its original character of "a mountain meadow of severe exposure." Olmsted did, however, wish to broaden the meadow by securing additional land to the west and by removing the maison Smith, which, he observed, "*stands in the midst of it (destroying its most marked natural quality, and interrupting lovely distant views*)." [38] (For this larger proposed meadow area, see plan 609-48).

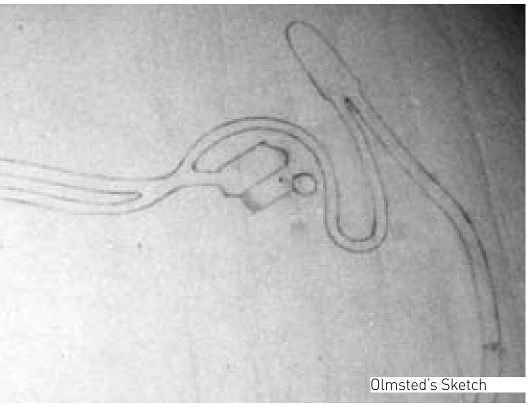
THE UPPERFELL

Despite its exposed situation, the top of the mountain was for Olmsted an especially important area for recreational purposes. He encircled it with a carriage drive, within which were a half-dozen openings in the woods. In the "*poor, thin and arid" soil of the exposed Upperfell, for instance, the "most elevated, exposed, Arctic, and continuously rocky" section, he proposed to replace the "dwarfed, feeble, and sickly*" deciduous trees with trees native to more severe situations that could be counted on to thrive there--scrubby pines and firs, along with birches, hornbeams and hawthorns. In a brief passage, Olmsted offered his general principles for treating the vegetation of this barren, exposed area: *" By a little improvement of the elements of growth; removing unsuitable and hopelessly debilitated trees; heading down; healing the wounds; balancing and protecting the more sturdy; planting low and specially hardy conifers and underwood in the northern and western borders, and gradually developing wind-breaks; introducing in each available situation trees and shrubs distinctively adapted to the circumstances; protecting all from fire, vermin, and the violence of man, there is not the least ground for doubt that a great and happy change in the general aspect of even the most forlorn localities would be brought about; a change giving a large return for the necessary investment. Nor is it to be apprehended that the new aspect would be less natural, or less mountain-like, or in any respect less valuable, than that which it would supersede. It would surely be much more so."* [39] In this passage, Olmsted described the principles of "aesthetic forestry" that were to guide his firm for many decades in the treatment and maintenance of large tracts of wooded parkland and scenic reservations.

Given the severity of the climate and the shallow soil, Olmsted aimed to protect it on the West with wind-breaks of dense conifers. Then, amongst the rocks, would be a low, sturdy wood, with trees and groups and small groves with numerous mossy openings." There would be "a great deal of natural rocky surface on which children can play and picnic parties sit, harming nothing. With the clearing and planting he had in mind, the existing fine distant views from many of these rocks would be retained." [40]

Olmsted anticipated extensive use of the Upperfell, urging that it be open, to be used "*by all comers at all times, for rambling at will; for picnicking; for all boys' and childrens' games and plays that do not involve the use of missiles*." He wanted to provide swings and other amusements for little children, and an abundance of comfortable seats. [41] To provide for the many visitors he hoped to attract to the Upperfell, Olmsted proposed construction there of a remarkable vista-structure and restaurant. Even before he proposed it to the commissioners he had his architectural associate Thomas Wisedell produce a series of plans that could be used to construct it. At this time Wisedell was serving as Olmsted's architect, working primarily on the structures and terraces of the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C.

Upperfell area, Plan Olmsted


Olmsted's Sketch

The Vista-Pavilion is in Highland Park, Rochester, NY

The building was to be set on the highest point of the mountain, the "*crown of the mountain*" at the north-western edge of the Upperfell. Covered with shingles and with its conspicuous parts made of "*axe-finished timber,*" it would have much the appearance of "*the best old French farm houses*" of Quebec. The building, with its partially covered gallery or "*Ombra*," would seat three hundred guests. The most distinctive feature of the structure was the viewing tower that Olmsted envisioned, rising high enough to provide a panoramic view and appearing to the surrounding countryside like an actual crowning form, sheathed in tin or—preferably—gilded copper. Although this highest section was to be visible from a distance, Olmsted planned to place the building in a saddle of rock so surrounded by a grove of low trees that it would "*scarcely be seen except by those who have occasion to use it.*"[42] This seasonal refectory and belvedere was the first building whose design Olmsted developed after the end of his partnership with Calvert Vaux. It predates even the equally imaginative summer house on the U.S. Capitol grounds, constructed in 1880 for which Thomas Wisedell prepared the detailed plans following Olmsted's conception.

Olmsted's crown of the mountain refectory was never constructed and the plans have been lost, but it gives clear indication of his willingness to make the summit of the mountain an interesting and pleasurable destination point for many visitors to the Upperfell. At the overlook point lower in the Upperfell and closer to the Glades, at the present site of the formal viewing balcony of the Grand Chalet, Olmsted planned an open overlook balcony for carriages. He proposed to have it constructed of wood in a rustic manner, in order to make it as inconspicuous as possible, and offered to engage the craftsman who had constructed the rustic structures in Central Park and Prospect Park. [43]

While Olmsted wished to have visitors to the Upperfell wander over large areas without restriction, he did design a system of paths running through the woods and along the edges of the openings in the woods. Some of these paths are classic examples of his approach, following continuous and easy curves that gradually open the scenery to view. He also planned a circuit path outside the carriage drive that gave visitors safe access to vistas from the top edge of the Crags. This path, which was to follow closely the route of the recently constructed "*sentier de l'escarpement*", illustrates the more sinuous course of an Olmsted path—again avoiding sharp curves or straight sections—in more difficult terrain with existing trees.

PLANTING AND FORESTRY PRACTICE

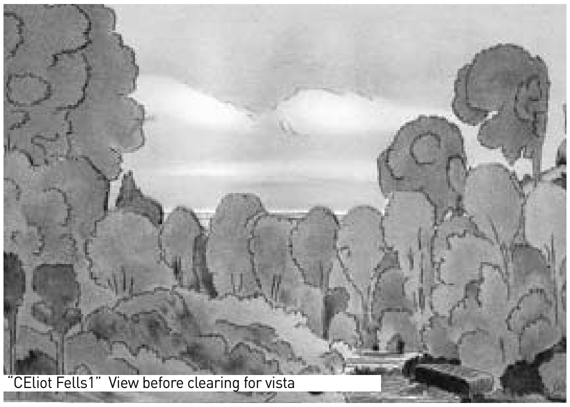
Olmsted's proposed selection of plant materials for the Upperfell was based on several considerations including enhancement of the apparent size of the mountain and achieving variety of landscape experience there. His proposal to plant a dense windbreak of conifers on the western side also served the purpose of extending by as much as two months the time period during which the top of the mountain would be comfortable to use. In any case, he expected that long-term maintenance would involve pruning trees to make them less prone to ice damage and fostering groups and groves that would assist in the same purpose. This was a concern of long standing, dealing with a problem that he had encountered since his earliest days on Central Park. The necessary "*use of the axe*" had always aroused opposition among park users as park workers sought to thin tree plantations in order to permit full growth of some of them. The public had not accepted the planting procedure of "*plant thick and thin quick*" that Olmsted and others of his profession universally applied in managing plantings. He described instances when gardeners on Central Park would beg him to take their axe and fell the trees himself, so angrily did the public respond to necessary cutting.

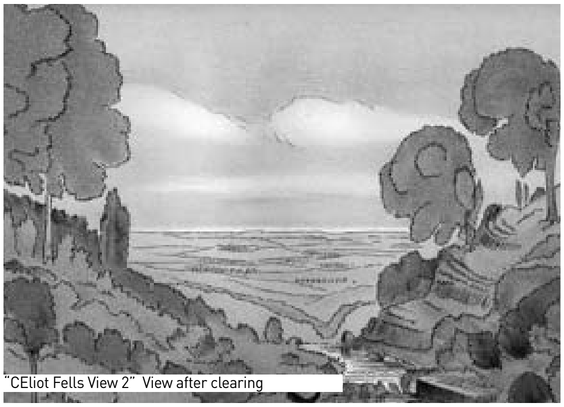
At the same time on Mount Royal there would be cutting to keep the numerous open areas from growing in, and there would be continuous cutting and pruning of trees to keep vistas open--not only at the half-dozen formal concourses on the drive around the Upperfell, for instance, but also at places where openings along the road revealed fleeting views of the surrounding countryside and rivers. The practice of "*aesthetic forestry*" as the Olmsted firm came to call it, was a fundamental part of the maintenance of openings and vistas, whether in Mount Royal, or the parks and scenic reservations of the Boston metropolitan system, or the trees along the Genesee River gorge in Rochester, N. Y., or on the low mountain of Iroquois Park in Louisville, Kentucky. (For a classic discussion of this issue, see excerpts in an appendix to this report from the report by Olmsted's protégé and partner Charles Eliot entitled "*Vegetation and Scenery in the [Boston] Metropolitan Reservations.*")

In his selection of plant materials, Olmsted usually chose a palette of species native to the area for which he was designing, nearly always supplementing these in limited amounts with plants not native to the place, but known to thrive in comparable climatic conditions. Such non-natives would help to achieve the effect he desired without appearing exotic or foreign. He reserved the term "exotics" for semi-tropical plants that needed much care and either had to be replaced each year or stored in hothouses or root cellars during the cold months. He was adamant on the importance of including non-natives.

Although Olmsted felt that there was no desirable place on the mountain for decorative flower-gardening, he made it clear that informal planting of flowers, primarily native flowers, should be part of the enrichment of landscape experience that he wished to secure at Mount Royal. The "*refinement of grace, delicacy, color and incense*" that they would provide was most desirable. In the broken, rocky terrain of at least the more protected parts of the upper mountain, such as the Brackenfell, he said that floral color should not be too intrusive: "*you need not be afraid of too great a profusion nor too great a variety of perennial and annuals plants; of too much color, nor of a growth too intricate and mazy.*" [43] In this regard he was drawing in part from the teachings of the English landscape gardener William Robinson, who led the revolt against decorative bedding-out of flowers. Olmsted frequently directed correspondents to Robinson's writings, particularly *The Wild Garden* and *Alpine Flowers for English Gardens*. In the years just preceding his work at Mount Royal, Olmsted had urged gardeners on Central Park to read Robinson's works and follow his precepts. At that time he considered the rocky, rugged site of the Ramble in Central Park to be the most promising place in any of his parks to realize the effects of Robinson's wild garden.

For Mount Royal, Olmsted predicted that if the commissioners would engage one man for five years to do such naturalistic planting of wild flowers the result would be "*charming refinements of mountain beauty, refinements which will be thoroughly appropriate,*" adding incalculably to the scenic value of the mountain. The best guide to this project, Olmsted indicated in his report on Mount Royal, was Robinson's concept as set forth in "*Wild Garden*" and "*Alpine Flowers.*" [45]

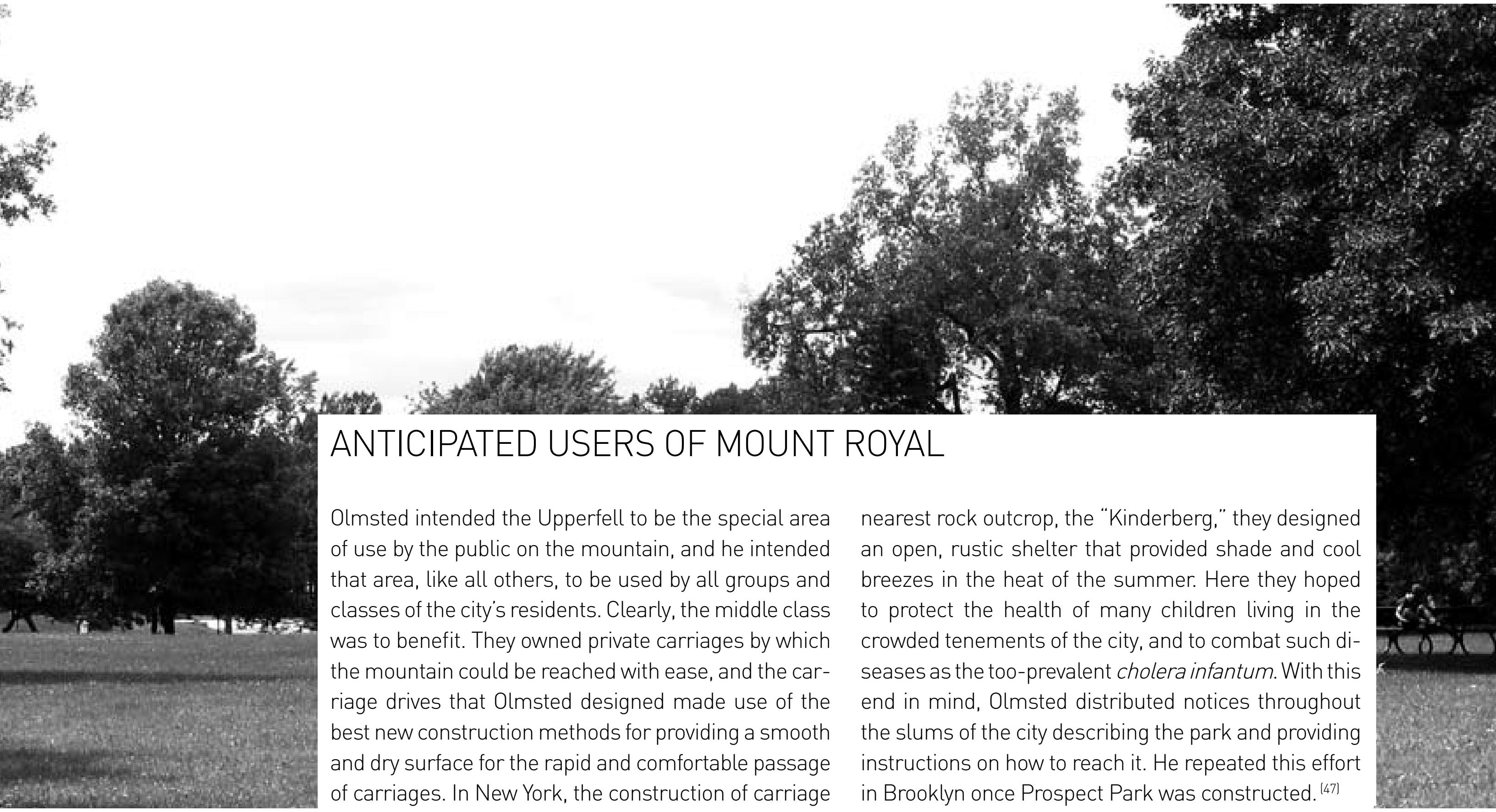

"CEliot Fells1" View before clearing for vista


"CEliot Fells View 2" View after clearing

MOUNT ROYAL PARK, INCLINE STEPS AND WOMEN

MAINTENANCE OF THE PARK

While Olmsted rejected labour-intensive decorative gardening at Mount Royal on both economic and aesthetic grounds, he did wish to have a permanent gardeners force that would be responsible for tending the new plantings, and particularly the wild flowers that he proposed to introduce. He had frequently proposed to have such a crew at Central Park that he could direct in establishing and sustaining the particular planting effects he wished to achieve. [46] In addition, Olmsted understood from experience the importance of keeping a park in orderly condition. Any neglect would lead quickly to misuse of the place.



ANTICIPATED USERS OF MOUNT ROYAL

Olmsted intended the Upperfell to be the special area of use by the public on the mountain, and he intended that area, like all others, to be used by all groups and classes of the city's residents. Clearly, the middle class was to benefit. They owned private carriages by which the mountain could be reached with ease, and the carriage drives that Olmsted designed made use of the best new construction methods for providing a smooth and dry surface for the rapid and comfortable passage of carriages. In New York, the construction of carriage drives in Central Park produced an immediate and great expansion in the number of private carriages in the city. The same was true for the many parks that followed. Good access to parks by streetcars usually lagged behind park construction by several years, giving middle-class visitors special benefit. And Olmsted emphasized the importance of parks as a means to hold taxpayers in the city and even to draw them from other cities. The intensely busy men of business needed the antidote to stress offered by parks as much as any other group. But even in New York the park immediately drew many visitors from all classes. This was Olmsted's great hope, that the parks would be the great common meeting-ground for the city, the place where the competitiveness and friction of the world of work would be replaced by a shared experience all the more valuable because it was shared.

Moreover, Olmsted saw the park as a source of health, especially for sick and convalescent citizens. In Central Park, he and Calvert Vaux had designed a special area for convalescents and children in the section of the park closest to the built-up city. On the first south-facing meadow area on the park site they placed the Dairy, with its rest rooms and milk counter. Then they added a special building for children and, on top of the nearest rock outcrop, the "Kinderberg," they designed an open, rustic shelter that provided shade and cool breezes in the heat of the summer. Here they hoped to protect the health of many children living in the crowded tenements of the city, and to combat such diseases as the too-prevalent *cholera infantum*. With this end in mind, Olmsted distributed notices throughout the slums of the city describing the park and providing instructions on how to reach it. He repeated this effort in Brooklyn once Prospect Park was constructed. [47]

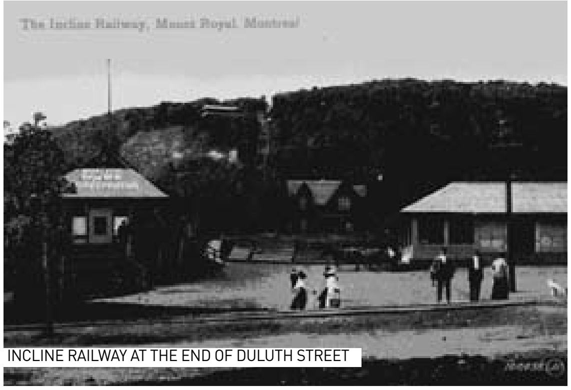
In addition to his concern to make his parks important sources of restored health, Olmsted intended his parks to benefit the working class. As he said of Central Park, they were planned primarily for the use of that part of the city population that could not leave the city during the summer for cooler and more comfortable places. Parks must be designed for that largest element of the population, those "*who are able to save enough from daily wages to be distinctly removed from penury, but whose accumulation is too small to relieve them from an anxious and narrowly dogged habit of mind and a strong incitement to persistent toilsome industry.*" The wives of these working men were equally held to a life of worry and constant hard work. The city stood to gain much from the alleviation of their daily toil that the park was designed to provide. [48]

While Olmsted had no control in any city over the provision of inexpensive public transportation from the thickly settled sections to the large parks he designed on the periphery, he did urge that park boards undertake to establish inexpensive carriage or boat facilities for the general public.

CONCLUSION

For Olmsted, the great treasure of Mount Royal was the scenery it possessed in the vistas it provided and the landscape experience it could provide with judicious and imaginative management of its vegetation. He proposed to take the "*genius of the place*" as the key to his plans, but he also insisted on securing greater scenic interest, great variety, intricacy, and richness than Nature itself, unaided by Art, would produce. He proposed to enhance the special character of each section of the mountain that the city had acquired for a park and then to make that scenery accessible by eleven km of carriage drives and an extensive network of pedestrian paths. All of this construction, and the creation of two restaurants and the formal reservoir with its promenade, created the frame for the landscape that was to be the central element. Thereafter, Olmsted defined the process of clearing, pruning, and planting that would realize the varied and enriched landscape he devised for the public park.

Especially important was the gradual ascent from the Cote Placide and Piedmont along the Underfell and Crags to the Brackenfell and then the open meadow of the Glades. All of this was a carefully arranged preparation for the experience of the Upperfell. Olmsted opposed any rapid ascent that short-circuited this experience, as by means of elevators, funiculars and tramways that were proposed from time to time.



INCLINE RAILWAY AT THE END OF DULUTH STREET

The construction of the Camilien-Houde roadway and the large parking area near the *maison Smith*—along with the retention of that building and the addition of sculptures and winter sports structures on the hillside of the Glades facing the *lac aux Castors*—has greatly reduced the intended effect of the Glades. It has also deprived them of the intended contrast that Olmsted intended them to offer to the experience of ascending the carriage drive along the Crags and Brackenfell. This, coupled with the size and architectural style of the Grand Chalet, has diverted attention from the Upperfell as the prime, and ultimate, scenic element of the public park of Mount Royal. Although the area was cleared of most of its vegetation in the 1960s, the vegetation has now been allowed to grow back to the point that both the landscape and access to it that Olmsted planned for has been lost, as has the series of vistas from it.

The long-term protection of a work of nature and art like the park of Mount Royal requires sustained dedication on the part of those responsible for its stewardship. It also requires a thorough understanding by those stewards of the distinctive qualities of the place and the means necessary for sustaining them. For the work of the stewards to be effective, they must be supported in turn by an understanding by the public at large of the issues involved. There needs to be a constant process of education at work by which each new generation of citizens comes to learn about the value of Mount Royal and the design that Frederick Law Olmsted created. Fortunately, he provided material that can greatly assist such an educational program.

The plan of 1877 itself is evocative and informative, but even more valuable is the remarkable report that he wrote and published for the instruction of the "owners of Mount Royal" as he called the people of Montreal. In the report *Mount Royal, Montreal* he explained his concept for the mountain in detail. He then went further, and set down his most incisive and impassioned statement concerning the power of designed landscape as he understood it. That statement has special relevance for the people of Montreal, whose number he anticipated would grow to number more than a million and all of whom he sought to serve in his planning of the park on their mountain.

For Olmsted, the great treasure of Mount Royal was the scenery it possessed in the vistas it provided and the landscape experience it could provide with judicious and imaginative management of its vegetation.

CHAPTER **FIVE**

THE OLMSTED REVIVAL

Fifty years ago, during the period in the United States of the civil rights movement and the centennial of the Civil War, Frederick Law Olmsted's reputation was primarily that of an outstanding commentator on the evils of slavery and the threat to free institutions of the "Cotton Kingdom" of the South. He was remembered for his books analyzing the society of the slave states and the administrative role he played during the Civil War as general secretary of the U.S. Sanitary Commission charged with providing inspection and medical supplies to the hundreds of thousands of volunteer soldiers in the Union Army. Since that time there has been a great change in his historical standing: now he is remembered for his dominant role in defining the professions of landscape architecture and city planning during the generation after the Civil War.

This change is due in large part to the movement for historic preservation that began, in an important way, forty years ago with passage of the historic preservation law and establishment of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. That movement, which focused first primarily on historic architecture, has broadened to include concern for designed landscape as well. The rise of the conservation movement and concern for preservation of wilderness and protection of endangered species and other ecological issues has acted in this movement as well.

Within the field of landscape architecture in general and the Olmsted design legacy in particular, several other developments provided additional impetus. The year 1972 was marked by the Olmsted Sesquicentennial, the observance of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Olmsted's birth by exhibitions on his career at the Whitney Museum in New York and the National Gallery in Washington. Within two years, the comprehensive biography of Olmsted by Laura Wood Roper was published by Johns Hopkins University Press and funding was secured from two Federal Agencies the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Publications Commission, for preparation of a multivolume edition of his papers. Johns Hopkins University Press was engaged to publish the series by the two senior editors of the project, Charles Capen McLaughlin and Charles E. Beveridge. →

Growing concern for protection of the Olmsted legacy led to purchase in 1879 by the National Park Service of Olmsted's home and office in Brookline, Mass. This place had been the site of the Olmsted firm for nearly a century, and the archive of documents, plans, and photographs from that extraordinary period in the life of the firm, was and continues to be invaluable. The 150,000 landscape plans and 100,000 photographs have been retained there at "Fairsted," the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, where they have been carefully and professionally conserved. Most of the documents, consisting of 300 linear feet of material, have been removed to the Library of Congress, where they have been preserved for scholarly reference on reels of microfilm.

At the same time, individual cities began to address the problem of decades of neglect, poor maintenance, and deterioration of their Olmsted parks. New York City led the way under the leadership of John Lindsey and Ed Koch, most notably by creation of the positions of administrator of Central Park and administrator of Prospect Park, those positions held, respectively, by Elizabeth Barlow Rogers and Tupper Thomas. Over the past twenty years both administrators have set a remarkable example of the restoration and recovery of great urban parks.

An important parallel development was the formation in 1980 of the National Association for Olmsted Parks, an organization is devoted to increasing public consciousness of the Olmsted legacy through advocacy, publications, and conferences. The NAOP serves as a central point of exchange between the varied groups engaged in the Olmsted revival, including citizen activists, landscape architects, park administrators, and historians.

During the past twenty years, many cities have begun the process of repair, preservation, and restoration of their Olmsted parks. In Rochester, N.Y., and Louisville, Kentucky.,centennial celebrations of the park systems designed for those cities by Olmsted and his firm beginning c. 1890 served as the impetus. In Atlanta impetus came in response to attempts to replace part of the linear park in Druid Hills with an expressway. In Massachusetts, the formation of the Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks led to a program funded by the state's Department of Environmental Management for fifteen Olmsted parks throughout the commonwealth. Seattle and Denver drew on their already well established tradition of care for their Olmsted-planned park systems.

For over a decade the city of Montreal has invested heavily in protection and enhancement of the park on Mount Royal. More recently the cities of Chicago, Baltimore, and Buffalo, and Essex County in New Jersey have invested significantly in the restoration of their Olmsted park systems.

In this work the auxiliary regional organizations formed after the National Association for Olmsted parks continue to play an important role. Most notable of these are the Friends of Maryland's Olmsted Landscapes, the Maine Olmsted Alliance

for Parks and Landscapes, the Louisville Olmsted Conservancy, the Seattle Friends of Olmsted Parks, the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance in Atlanta, the Branch Brook Park Alliance and the Weequahic Park Alliance in Newark, N.J., and the newly formed Buffalo Parks Conservancy.

The Connecticut Olmsted Heritage Alliance held its first annual meeting in April 2006, and preparations are underway for creation of a state-wide Olmsted organization in New Jersey. Numerous other alliances devoted to a single park have also been formed, most notably the Central Park Conservancy and the Prospect Park Alliance. As a result of all these organizations and the growing support by politicians and the public at large, millions of dollars have been appropriated and dispersed for preparation of park histories, restoration and preservations plans, and construction on the ground. The writer himself has been involved in over forty of these parks.

It is important to note that despite many years of neglect and unfortunate intrusions, most of the parks designed by Olmsted and his firm have retained their distinctive character and are capable of being repaired and restored. In this respect, now as when they were created, each represents a distinctive element of the Olmsted legacy, adding richness to the whole as does each movement to a piece of music. Central Park is a classic demonstration of treatment of a rugged, rocky site, while Prospect Park demonstrates the ideal of the pastoral, or meadow park. The Boston Back Bay Fens and Muddy River are the classic example of preservation of a stream valley as public open space, while Genesee Valley Park and Seneca Park in Rochester, N.Y., preserve the landscape along a the urbanized section of a river. Jackson Park in Chicago with its extensive lagoons is the outstanding example of a water-park providing protected areas for small boats and a lakefront shore for swimming. In this distinguished company, Mount Royal demonstrates an urban space reserved for its mountain character, enriched by the art of the landscape architect, with vistas made accessible by a variety of walks and drives. It is the distinctive character of each park designed by Olmsted that provides special richness to the whole remarkable legacy of public parks that he created and that persists to this day. The restoration and preservation of each park—as demonstrated by the parks listed above—serves to keep that legacy alive.

NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION *for*
OLMSTED
PARKS

CHAPTER **SIX**

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR OLMSTED PARKS DECLARATION ON MOUNT ROYAL

In the fall of 2002, the trustees of the National Association for Olmsted Parks met in Montreal. As part of their meeting they received presentations on the preservation work done on the mountain by the City of Montreal during the previous decade and visited the park on the mountain designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. As a result they issued a Declaration concerning Mount Royal that stands as a significant evaluation of the significance of the park, its present condition, and its future importance (the original text is appendiced). The declaration deserves attention, both because of the prestige of the NAOP as an interpreter and defender of the landscape design legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted, and because of the high standing on the Olmsted preservation movement of the persons who drew up and signed it. These signatories have played a leading role in the Olmsted historic landscape movement in their individual cities, which include Brooklyn, Seattle, Boston, Atlanta, New York, Buffalo, Baltimore, Newark, N.J., Rochester, N.Y., and Washington, D.C. Accordingly, they were impressed by the design legacy that Olmsted created for Montreal, both in the park itself and in the documents he created to direct and explain the realization of his concept for the mountain. They were also impressed by the accomplishments during the previous decade of the city of Montreal and its *Parks Department* as well as by the promise for the future.

In their Declaration, the trustees of the NAOP expressed their relief that Mount Royal had suffered fewer intrusions incompatible with the Olmsted plan than is the case with a number of other parks. At the same time, they warned that care must be taken to limit and to reduce the number of such intrusions. In keeping with this emphasis on the importance of respecting Olmsted's original conception in order to gain the greatest benefit for the residents of Montreal, the trustees pointed out the two critical aspects of Olmsted's concept that Mount Royal shares with his other great parks. One aspect is that he conceived Mount Royal as a public open space that would be the result both of natural processes and of landscape art. His purpose was to create an experience of natural scenery that would have a unique character stemming from the particular qualities of the mountain itself. He proposed to take the landscape qualities of the mountain and develop them, through planting and clearing, in a way that created a succession of varying landscape experiences. Secondly, he planned a coherent system of drives and walks by which that landscape could be best experienced, and carefully arranged the circulation system so as to be fully available to all, even persons in wheelchairs. In this way he produced a unique, distinctive design for a park that was based on the particular qualities and potential of Mount Royal itself. Creation of spaces with special psychological power that were truly accessible was the hallmark of Olmsted's genius. As the NAOP Declaration makes clear, this is a great recreational resource for Montrealers both today and in the future. (see appendices)

CHAPTER **SEVEN**

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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The vista structure is indeed in Highland Park, Rochester, NY, and designed to Olmsted's specifications by the firm of Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge, the successors to Henry Hobson Richardson, formed after his death in 1886.

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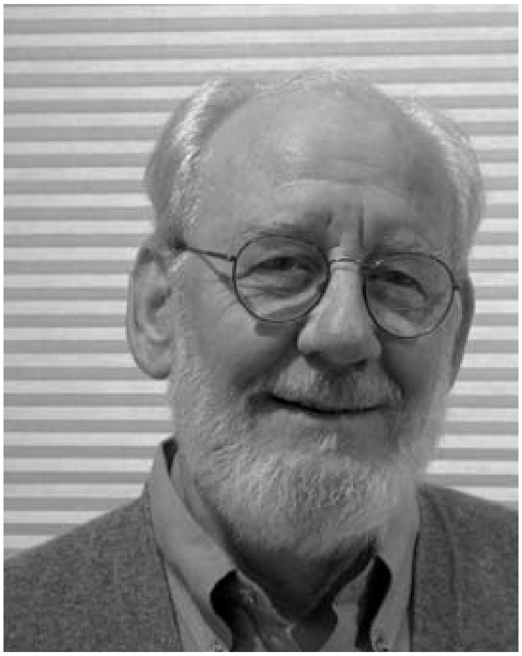

DR. CHARLES E. BEVERIDGE, HISTORIAN

CHAPTER **EIGHT**

PRESENTATION OF THE AUTHOR
DR. CHARLES E. BEVERIDGE, HISTORIAN

For the past forty-five years the focus of Charles Beveridges' research as a historian has been the career of Frederick Law Olmsted. In 1961 he received a Ford Foundation Fellowship that enabled him to begin research for his PhD dissertation at the University of Wisconsin on Olmsted's early formative years. He completed the dissertation in 1966 and then continued research and writing on Olmsted's years as a landscape architect. In 1973 Beveridge joined with the historian Charles C. McLaughlin in preparing a multi-volume edition of Olmsted's Papers, which is published by the Johns Hopkins University Press. Since that time he has been editor of the Olmsted Papers, becoming series editor in 1981 and senior editor in 1993. In the process, he has read all of Olmsted's extant writings on the subject of landscape design.

He has given some two hundred lectures on Olmsted to a wide variety of audiences, and has served as historical consultant for forty projects devoted to preservation and restoration of Olmsted's landscape works. These include serving as program-wide historical advisor to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management for a restoration program for the Boston Emerald Necklace and seven other parks designed by the Olmsted firm in that state.

He served as historical advisor for a restoration program in Rochester, N.Y. involving Olmsted's three principal parks and eight small parks and squares in that city, and did the same for the Louisville Olmsted Conservancy and its program for Olmsted's three principal parks and connecting parkways. Over the past twenty years he has advised the citizen activists engaged in restoring the Olmsted linear parks in the Druid Hills section of Atlanta, as well as advising on the restoration program for Grant Park in that city and providing guidance on Olmsted's design principles for the planners of Freedom Park In Montreal he has served as historical advisor for the restoration work on Mount Royal and has provided design guidance concerning the parking overlook area on the *voie Camillen-Houde* and the Glades and *Lac aux castors* area.

Dr. Beveridge has provided advice and on-screen narration for several short films on Olmsted; in addition he was on-screen narrator for the Metropolitan Museum's film "Olmsted and Central Park" and was historical advisor and co-author of the script for the PBS film "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Public Park in America," produced by WGBH in 1990.

In addition, he has written numerous articles concerning Olmsted, has served as supervising editor or co-editor of eight volumes of the Olmsted Papers, and is the author, in collaboration with the photographer Paul Rocheleau, of *Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape*, published by Rizzoli International Press in 1995. He has received several awards for my writing and consulting activities and in 2005, was made an honorary member of the American Society of Landscape Architects and was awarded the Olmsted Medal, the highest honor the ASLA can bestow on a person who is not a landscape architect.

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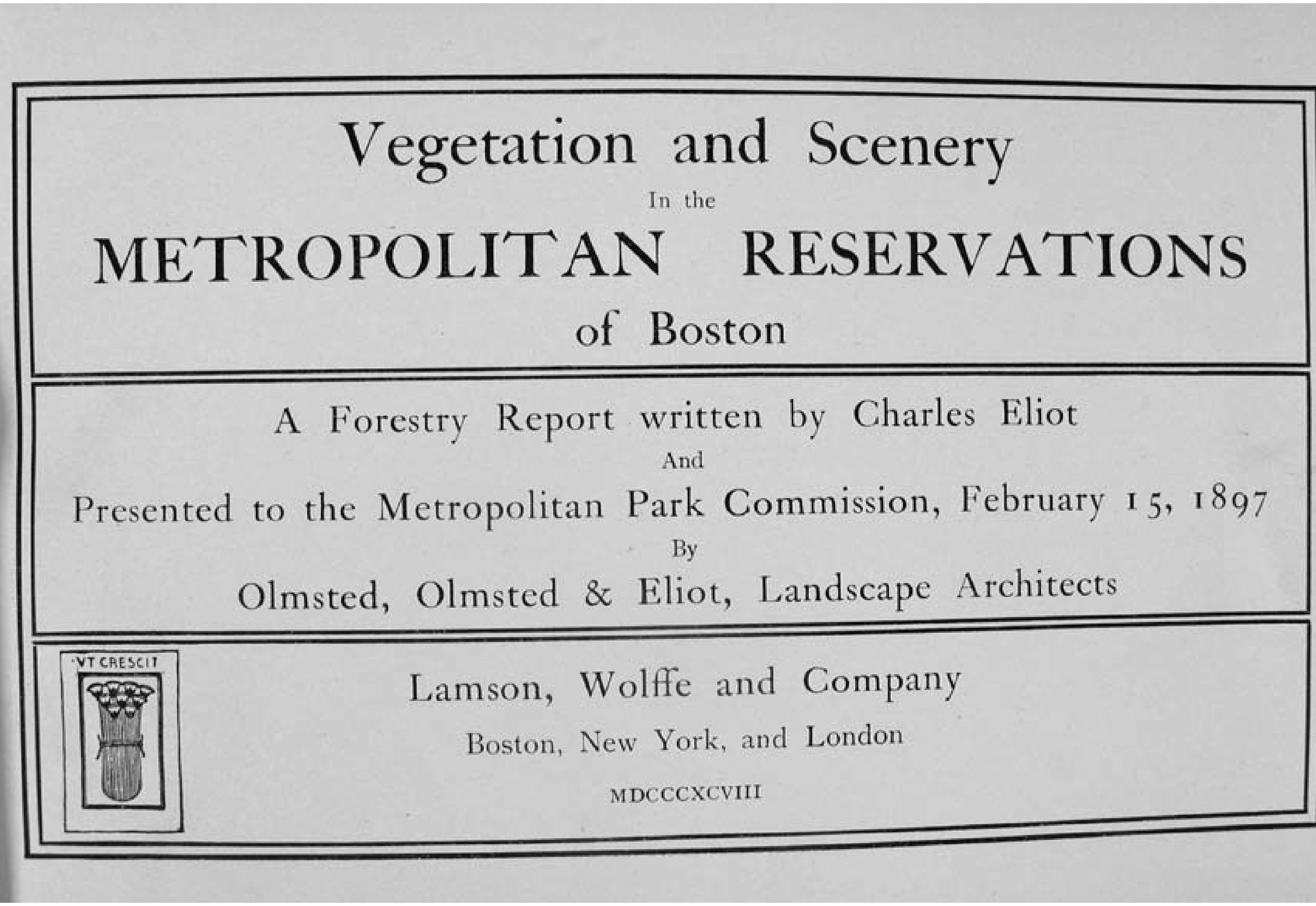


Vegetation and Scenery

In the

METROPOLITAN RESERVATIONS

of Boston

A Forestry Report written by Charles Eliot

And

Presented to the Metropolitan Park Commission, February 15, 1897

By

Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot, Landscape Architects

VT CRESCIT

Lamson, Wolffe and Company

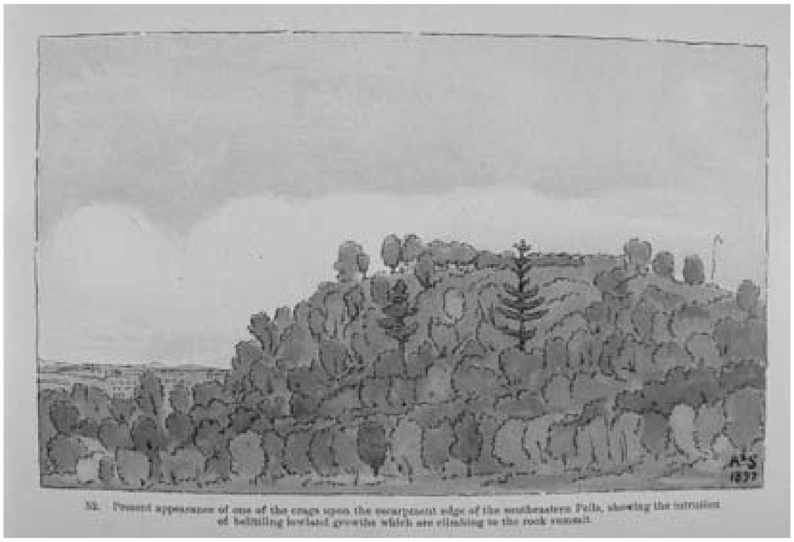
Boston, New York, and London

MDCCCXCVIII

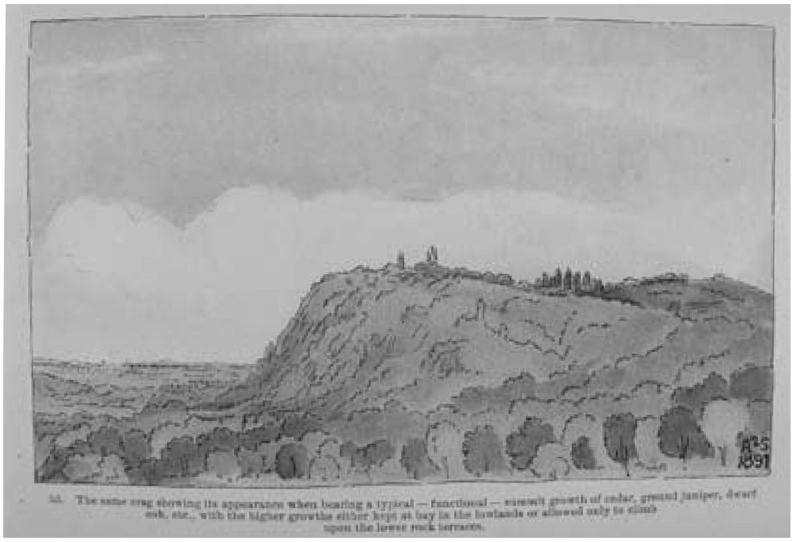
FROM:
VEGETATION AND SCENERY
IN THE METROPOLITAN RESERVATIONS OF BOSTON

A FORESTRY WRITTEN BY CHARLES ELIOT
PRESENTED TO THE METROPOLITAN PARK COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 15, 1897

OLMSTED, OLMSTED & ELIOT
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



Present appearance of one of the crags upon the escarpment edge of the southeastern Fells, showing the intrusion of belittling lowland growths which are climbing to the rock summit. ↙

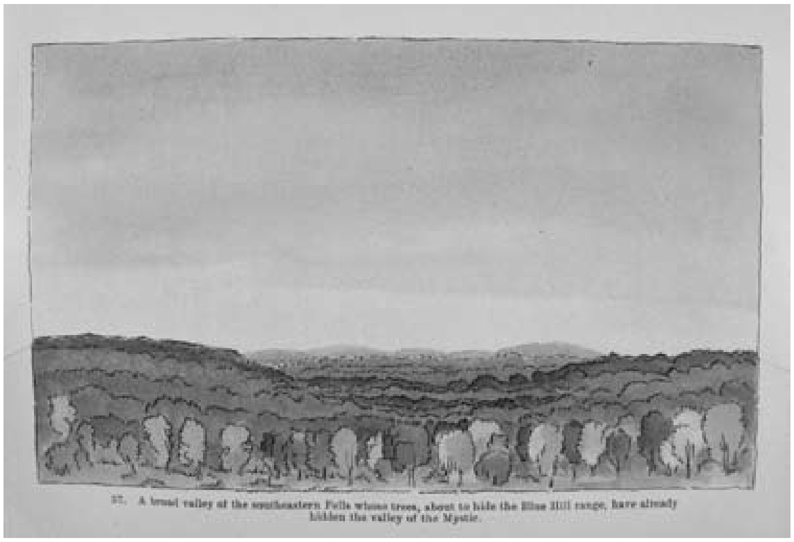


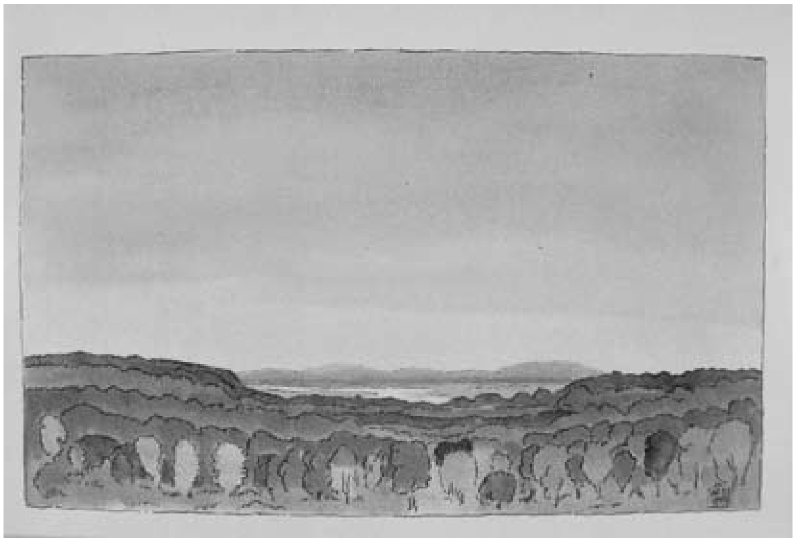
The same crag showing its appearance when bearing a typical – functional – summit growth of cedar, ground juniper, dwarf oak, etc., with the higher growths either kept at bay in the lowlands or allowed only to climb.

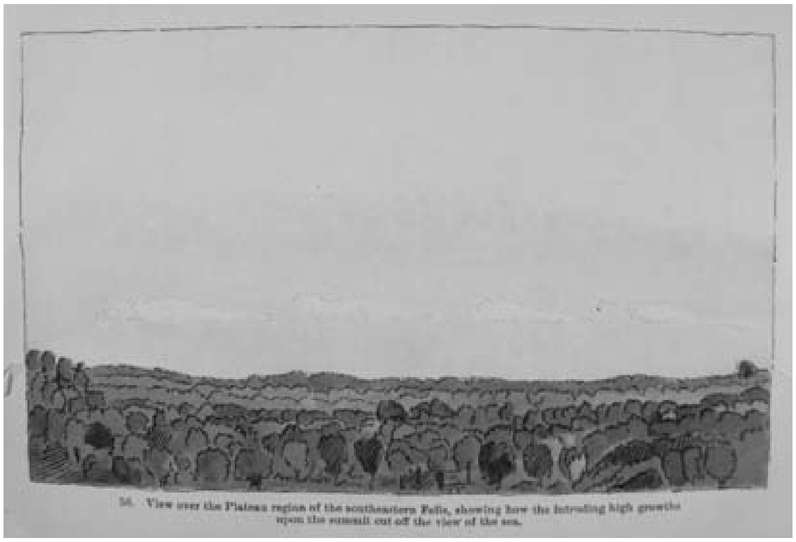
Tree-clogged notch, near the southeastern escarpment of the Fells, which might command the Malden-Melrose valley and the Saugus hills. ↘

A pasture, above Virginia Wood in the Fells, already overgrown with bushes which hide the broad view of the villages about Melrose and the hills in the northeast stretching away to the Lynn Woods. ↙

A broad valley of the southeastern Fells whose trees, about to hide the Blue Hill range, have already hidden the valley of the Mystic. ↘







View over the Plateau region of the southeastern Fells, showing how the intruding high growths upon the summit cut off the view of the sea. ↙

National Association for Olmsted Parks
Declaration on Mount Royal

Mount Royal is the treasured common patrimony of Montreal, the one truly iconic and emblematic feature of the city. The dominant conception of how it should be treated and used has been the plan for Mount Royal Park prepared in 1877 by the famous landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted.

Olmsted's concept for the park is one of his most significant achievements. The report that he wrote explaining that concept is among his finest statements of what a scenic park can provide for the residents of a city. He provided a rich description of how the charm of natural scenery, heightened by landscape art, could provide a unique, restorative experience for Montreal citizens for generations to come. He demonstrated how landscape architecture is an art form and described in detail the succession of landscape scenes that were to unfold along the main road of the park.

His concept of creating a series of landscape poems along a winding road that gradually ascends the mountain is still relevant today and should remain as the structuring element and guiding principle for the park and some areas adjacent to it.

Unlike many other large urban parks that Olmsted designed, Mount Royal has been spared major intrusions that are incompatible with their original plan such as expressways, zoos, golf courses, extensive athletic facilities and museums. Still, three transmission towers bestride the mountain heights and a massive parking lot has absorbed an important part of what Olmsted intended to be the largest open space of the park, the Glades. These intrusions should eventually be altered to be more in keeping with Olmsted's original intent.

Most visitors continue to enjoy the park as Olmsted planned for them to do over a century ago. This is due in part to increasing awareness by Montrealers of Olmsted's noticeable contribution to their city. They now perceive that the park is not simply a work of nature, but also a work of art and a valuable heritage to be preserved. The ongoing restoration and rehabilitation work in the park, largely inspired by Olmsted's vision, has recovered significant elements of his vision.

During the past hundred years the City of Montreal has expanded considerably the boundaries of its historic park, an unusual development in a prosperous urban center. The 1992 Plan for he Conservation and Restoration of Mount Royal proposed further enlarging Mount Royal Park and integrating it within a larger park and greenspace system in keeping with Olmsted's open space planning concepts and should be acted on. This commitment for the park and its surroundings was renewed and reinforced at the Summits in spring 2002 and is represented by the Mount Royal Charter.

Mount Royal Park is one of the most significant elements of the Olmsted Heritage in North America today.

The NAOP encourages the city of Montreal, its citizens and Les Amis de la Montagne, with the support of their governments, to continue to value and maintain this Olmsted masterpiece, ensuring its continued use and enjoyment for generations to come.

In keeping with the restoration and rehabilitation work that has been completed over the last decade, we support:

- respecting Olmsted's original design intentions and aesthetic principles when re-landscaping open space parkland and carrying out forestry work.
- seeking to integrate existing structures and constructed features into the Olmsted landscape
- improving public access to the mountain from adjacent areas, both urban and institutional.
- sharing with the public the knowledge acquired through research and hands-on experience as a vital part of developing a deeper understanding of this unique Olmsted legacy.

September 27, 2002
Montreal, Canada

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Deirdre Cunningham, Rochester, NY
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